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Spence, H. D. M. 1836-1917,
Thirty thousand thoughts

THIRTY THOUSAND THOUGHTS.

SECTIONS XII.—XV.

WITH SECTIONAL INDICES.

THIRTY THOUSAND THOUGHTS,

BEING

EXTRACTS COVERING A COMPREHENSIVE CIRCLE OF RELIGIOUS AND ALLIED TOPICS,

GATHERED FROM THE BEST AVAILABLE SOURCES, OF ALL AGES AND ALL SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT
WITH SUGGESTIVE AND SEMINAL HEADINGS, AND HOMILETICAL
AND ILLUMINATIVE FRAMEWORK:
THE WHOLE ARRANGED UPON A SCIENTIFIC BASIS.
WITH
CLASSIFIED AND THOUGHT-MULTIPLYING LISTS, COMPARATIVE TABLES, AND ELABORATE INDICES, ALPHABETICAL, TOPICAL, TEXTUAL, AND SCRIPTURAL.

EDITED BY THE
REV. CANON H. D. M. SPENCE, M.A.,
REV. JOSEPH S. EXELL, M.A.,
REV. CHARLES NEIL, M.A.

XII. JEHOVISTIC NAMES AND TITLES OF GOD.
XIII. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD. XIV. SINS. XV. CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS.

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PREFACE.

In the present Volume commence what may be regarded as the Christian Dogmatic Sections of this work. On account of the size of this department it was from the first deemed advisable to form a few relief sections. We are glad to state that in the practical working we have been able to arrange all under fewer sub-divisions than was originally contemplated.

In a book of this nature, although, as we formerly observed, the arrangement in each department is more or less under our control, yet the order in which the various parts appear depends in a degree upon the respective times when the extracts are supplied by literary collectors. Consequently some of the sub-sections will be found before, and some after, the main section. No difficulty, however, ought to occur, since each sub-section is as complete in its way as if it were a main section.

This volume opens with "The Titles of God," which embrace all that interesting, instructive, but seldom sufficiently considered group of names for Deity in the Old Testament that are compounds of the solemn word JEHOVAH. Although doubtless each of these composite and important titles had received isolated pulpit treatment, yet it was reserved for the late Canon Reeves to publish in a popular form a series of discourses upon them as a separate department of Theological Study. The effort of this writer was of a very modest character, and limited by the special circumstance connected with the delivery of his discourses. The number of thoughts contained in this section, though the extracts are comparatively few, will be found to be of a wider range than could be practically brought together in any course of sermons. It is one of the first aims in this work, to suggest themes for a large circle rather than to elaborate a few ideas which could be used without further painstaking.

The next section treats of the subject of "The Attributes of God." Here a precisely opposite difficulty presented itself. No longer a paucity, but a plethora, of literary matter was before us. The task was not to find a writer who treated the subject, but to select a few out of huge piles of weighty if not brilliant extracts from a legion of theological treatises. The principles of selection which we endeavoured to carry out were those explained in the Preface to the First Volume. We sought not only to give learned remarks, which upon this subject abound in Theological Lectures and Standard Text Books, but also prominently to introduce more popular utterances, when of a suggestive character, and from a preacher's point of view, which are likely to be serviceable for the actual edification or comfort of souls seeking real help.

Between these relief sections on the Divine Names and Attributes, and the main section, comes the last of the foregoing relief sections, treating upon different forms of man's departure from the image of his Divine Creator. We are not aware of any work which deals systematically with the various sins and wickednesses of man's spiritual life. In this section we have not furnished anything like a complete list of sins and failings, as many of these will naturally be considered in a future section termed "Vices," which will supplement the long section termed "Virtues" in Volumes Two and Three. Still, the groups of sins here named are tolerably comprehensive: their treatment occupies several pages, and will furnish topics which parents and teachers might profitably turn to good account in training the young.

The Christian Dogmatic Section (properly so called) which next follows, is the one that has been especially and continually inquired after, by many of our warmest friends in this country and also in America. On account of the shoals of extracts which have reached us during the last three years, the delay in proceeding with this section will not create surprise, although it may have

occasioned a little disappointment. It is only right to state that the formidable nature of the task caused no disinclination to undertake it. But the time that has elapsed was required in order to do justice to this main feature of the whole undertaking.

Vast as is the field to be surveyed in Dogmatics, the leading doctrines and duties of the Christian faith can, by a careful and accurate scheme of classification, for all except very special purposes, be named within reasonable limits. Without going very minutely into the question why the theological treatises. so frequently published in the early part of the century, have now fallen much into disfavour, we believe that one reason is their unscientific method in the Classification of Topics. The unsatisfactory arrangement found in English, American, and German treatises, is shown in a masterly essay on Christian Dogmatics, by John Macpherson, which appeared in "The British and Foreign Review," 1875.

In accordance with a suggested arrangement at the end of that article, we have divided the main Dogmatic Section into three divisions, viz.: 1st, *The Normal Relations between God and Man;* 2nd, *Their Breach;* and 3rd, *Their Restoration.* It was considered best to have a somewhat lengthy introduction, in which will be found much matter of a useful kind not to be obtained without the possession of a large library and diligent search.

In this volume we leave off at a convenient break in the last division of the Dogmatic Section, which the next volume will continue and complete. Many of the extracts in the present volume will show how, by skilful handling, what are considered somewhat well-worn themes, may be presented in a fresh and interesting manner.

If this severe portion of our task should lead to a more decided exhibition of the great body of Christian truth, in a clear, vigorous, and comprehensive manner, the unremitting labour of those engaged upon it will be repaid.

As the Classification of the whole section appears in more than one Table, we here subjoin the Whole Scheme.[1]

PART I.

INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY.

PART II.

THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

A. The Christian Doctrine of God.
B. The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity.
C. The Christian Doctrine of Creation.

PART III.

BREACH OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

The Fact and Fruit of Sin.

PART IV.

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

A. Divine Preliminary Arrangements for the Redemption of Man.
B. The Scheme of Redemption generally Considered.
C. The Special Acts and Decrees of God the Father in Redemption.
D. The Work and Office of God the Son in Redemption.
E. The Operation of the Holy Ghost in Redemption.
F. The Means of Grace.
G. Christian Graces, Exercises, and Duties.
H. Christian Privileges.
I. The Ultimate Awards, or the Four Last Things.

[1] *See* Note at top of Alphabetical List, p. 524.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

SECTION XII. Jehovistic Names and Titles of God 3

SECTION XIII. The Attributes of God 15

SECTION XIV. Sins 112

SECTION XV. Christian Dogmatics 232

Part I. Introduction 232

„ II. The Normal Relations between God and Man 284

„ III. Breach of the Normal Relations between God and Man 381

„ IV. Restoration of the Normal Relations between God and Man (*commenced*) . 391

SECTIONAL INDICES:—

I. Jehovistic Names and Titles of God 520

II. The Attributes of God 521

III. Sins 522

IV. Christian Dogmatics 524

SECTION XII.

JEHOVISTIC NAMES AND TITLES OF GOD

SECTION XII.

JEHOVISTIC NAMES AND TITLES OF GOD.

1

INTRODUCTORY.

(Jehovah.)

I. Import and Significance of the Title Jehovah.

1 As implied in the name "I Am."

(1) *With regard to the nature of the Divine action attendant on self-existence in alliance with everlasting immutability.*

[10792] From the idea of underived and independent existence which seems to be the root idea in this Divine name, follows at once that of independent and uncontrolled will and action. "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and My name is I Am." As God's being is underived, so His will is uncontrolled. All other being flows from Him, so all other wills must bend to His. It may not always seem so; it may rather seem as if the reverse of this were sometimes true. Doubtless in Moses' day the will of Pharaoh seemed to be the great power in Egypt. But God revealed Himself as Jehovah, the self-existent, the supreme, the sovereign Will, and Pharaoh—what proved he then? Man that is a worm, and a son of man that is a worm. With the idea of underived existence are also closely allied those of eternity and unchangeableness. He who has in Himself the cause of His being can never cease to be; and He cannot change. This has been thought by not a few to be the primary import of the name Jehovah, which has accordingly been rendered the Eternal.—*Rev. Duncan H. Weir, D.D.*

[10793] This is a name full of the deepest meaning. It asserts the self-existence, the eternity, and immutability of the Deity. Only God can say I Am. His creatures are not, except as He gives them life and keeps them living. We are what God has made us, what He enables us to be. He is that He is, the only self-existing, self-upholding Being, God over all and in all. I Am expresses also the eternity of the Godhead—that was, and is, and is to come. Past and future are included in this name; or, rather, there can be no past nor future in respect of God. His years are not spent, as ours are, like a tale that is told. In His existence there is neither beginning nor end; nothing transitory or successive; nothing bygone or to come. His duration is a simple and eternal *now*. Before His sight all things, past, present, and to come, are constantly outspread. God "inhabiteth eternity:" as He fills all space and is everywhere present, so He fills all time, not passing through it, but dwelling in every part of it. Before all worlds He Is; now while we speak of Him He Is; and hereafter, in that eternity on which we all shall enter, He already Is. By this name the immutability of the Godhead likewise is declared, "I Am that I Am." What God is now He has always been, and always will be. With Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Change is a consequence of imperfection. God can never be greater or less than He is. I Am includes all that God can be. It sums up all the attributes of perfectness; it is the standard from which there can be no departure and no change.—*T. S. Millington.*

[10794] God called Himself Jehovah-jireh, when He revealed unto Abraham the mystery of redeeming wisdom and love; and the father of the faithful beheld in a type, afar off, the Lord providing a ransom even in the person of His Son, His only begotten and well beloved. —*Saphir.*

II. Its Awful Sacredness and Majesty.

[10795] This was what the Jews called "the incommunicable name." They looked upon it with such awe and reverence that they would not allow themselves to pronounce it. It is never applied to any created being in the Scriptures. It cannot be so applied, for it denotes the necessary, independent, and eternal existence of the Most High. It includes the past, the present, and the future. It brings before us the Divine Being as the One who "was, and is, and is to come." How thankful we should be

that with this awful name, Jehovah, God has been pleased to associate other titles, such as Jireh, Ropheka, Nissi, Shalom, and so on; all expressive of His thoughts of love and purposes of mercy towards us as His erring creatures! for, if He had not done this, it is true, as an old writer has observed, that "this awful title of Jehovah could only have thundered ten thousand terrors, and have filled the soul of a fallen man with all the anguish of 'a consuming fire.'" —*R. Newton, D.D.*

2

JEHOVAH-ELYON.

("*The Lord Most High*," *Psa.* vii. 17., xlvii. 2, xcvii. 9.)

I. THE GREATNESS OF GOD EXPRESSED IN THIS TITLE.

1 As regards time and space.

[10796] He inhabiteth eternity. There are some subjects on which it would be good to dwell, if it were only for the sake of that enlargement of mind which is produced by their contemplation. And eternity is one of these, so that you cannot steadily fix the thoughts upon it without being sensible of a peculiar kind of elevation, at the same time that you are humbled by a personal feeling of utter insignificance. You have come in contact with something so immeasurable—beyond the narrow range of our common speculations—that you are exalted by the very conception of it. Now the only way we have of forming any idea of eternity is by going, step by step, up to the largest measures of time we know of, and so ascending, on and on, till we are lost in wonder. We cannot grasp eternity, but we can learn something of it by perceiving; that, rise to what portion of time we will, eternity is vaster than the vastest. It is difficult to say which conception carries with it the greatest exaltation—that of boundless space or that of unbounded time. When we pass from the tame and narrow scenery of our own country, and stand on those spots of earth in which nature puts on her wilder and more awful forms, we are conscious of something of the grandeur which belongs to the thought of space. Go where the strong foundations of the earth lie around you in their massive majesty, and mountain after mountain rears its snow to heaven in a giant chain, and then, when this bursts upon you for the first time in life, there is that peculiar feeling which we call, in common language, an enlargement of ideas. But when we are told that the sublimity of those dizzy heights is but a nameless speck in comparison with the globe of which they form the girdle; and when we pass on to think of that globe itself as a minute spot in that mighty system to which it belongs, so that our world might be annihilated, and its loss would not be felt; and when we are told that eighty millions of such systems roll in the world of space, to which our own system again is as nothing; and when we are again pressed with the recollection that beyond those furthest limits creative power is exerted immeasurably further than eye can reach, or thought can penetrate; then, brethren, the awe which comes upon the heart is only, after all, a tribute to a *portion* of God's greatness.—*Rev. F. W. Robertson.*

2 As regards character.

[10797] His name is Holy. The chief idea which this would convey to us is separation from evil. There is perhaps a time drawing near when those of us who shall stand at His right hand, purified from all evil taint, shall be able to comprehend absolutely what is meant by the holiness of God. At present, with hearts cleaving down to earth, and tossed by a thousand gusts of unholy passion, we can only form a dim conception relatively of that which it implies. None but the pure can understand purity. The chief knowledge which we have of God's holiness comes from our acquaintance with unholiness. We know what impurity is —God is *not* that. We know what injustice is—God is *not* that. We know what restlessness, and guilt, and passion are, and deceitfulness, and pride, and waywardness—all these we know. God is none of these. And this is our chief acquaintance with His character. We know what God is *not*. We scarcely can be rightly said to know, that is to feel, what God *is*. And therefore, this is implied in the very name of holiness. Holiness in the Jewish sense means simple separateness. From all that is wrong, and mean, and base, our God is for ever separate. Human life is full of God's recoil from sin. In the writhings of a heart which has been made to possess its own iniquities—in the dark spot which guilt leaves upon the conscience, rising up at times in a man's gayest moments, as if it will not come out—in the restlessness and the feverishness which follow the efforts of the man who has indulged habits of sin too long—in all these there is a law repelling wickedness from the presence of the Most High—which proclaims that God is holy.—*Ibid.*

3

JEHOVAH-JIREH.

("*The Lord will provide*," *Gen.* xxii. 14.)

I. NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DIVINE PROVISION FOR MAN.

1 As regards time.

(1) *It implies unerring faithfulness manifested in God-like self-sufficiency.*

[10798] He does not consult our shortsighted wisdom in what He does. The clouds do not

consult the earth as to when they shall visit its fruits and flowers, its cornfields and forests, with their watery treasures. The pining plant does not dictate to the firmament-reservoirs as to when they shall unseal their hidden stores. These give a kindly and needful supply "in due season," and the earth has never yet (for six thousand years) had to complain of them as niggard almoners of their Creator's bounty. So it is with the soul: He who maketh the clouds His chariot—who opens and shuts at will the windows of heaven—locking and unlocking the fountains of the great deep—says to all His people, "Trust Me; I will give you all needed present blessings; 'I will come unto you as the rain, as the latter and former rain upon the earth.' I do not pledge myself as to how or when the rain shall fall—but 'I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.'"—*Rev. J. R. Macduff, D.D.*

2 As regards eternity.

(1) *It implies the fulness of Divine mercy in providing a way to everlasting life.*

[10799] We do not estimate God's provision aright unless we include eternity. The extreme poverty we see on the one hand, and the unbounded wealth on the other; the wasting sickness and the radiant health; the incessant trial and the unclouded prosperity; the excessive labour and the unwholesome indolence—all perplex us if we do not include eternity. But when we are enabled to realize this great thought, then these tiny inequalities of earth vanish from our view; and we may cradle ourselves in the blessed truth, that the Eternal God, who is our refuge, has eternally provided the path, and the portion—the ways and the means—by and through which His children shall come to a "city of habitation."—*Rev. J. M. Reeve, M.A.*

4

JEHOVAH-MEKADDESHCEM.

("*The Lord that doth sanctify you*," *Exod.* xxxi. 13; *Levit.* xx. 8, xxi. 8, xxii. 9, 16; *Ezek.* xx. 12.)

I. IMPORT OF THIS TITLE, AND ITS PRESENT APPLICATION.

[10800] This title is used to enforce the necessity of strict observance of the Sabbath and of Divine ordinances. Although under the Christian dispensation we are under a covenant of greater freedom from ceremonial and ritual observances, yet divinely instituted sacraments, ordinances, and properly appointed church ceremonies must not be slighted. The title Jehovah-Mekaddeshcem is a note of warning against a false pietism, affected spiritualism, and a wild transcendentalism. In our zeal against mere externalism and meaningless or misguiding ritual, there is a danger of being suspended in the air without a necessary sacramental and liturgical and historical basis.—*C. N.*

[10801] This title also suggests to us the manner in which Divine worship should be rendered. Neglect of ordinances results frequently from a want of holy awe and becoming reverence, and undue haste in our approaches to Deity. The wild excitement of enthusiastic but doubtless well-meaning revivalists, no less than the giddiness and worldliness of fashionable congregations, are things to be deplored. God requires of us a spiritual worship, but yet there are divinely appointed ministers, divinely instituted sacraments, and the necessary and befitting accessories of public worship. God also requires that our worship shall be one of holy love and fervour, yet it ought to be of an orderly and sober character.—*Ibid.*

5

JEHOVAH-NISSI.

("*The Lord my banner*," *Exod.* xvii. 15.)

I. LESSONS, WARNINGS, AND ENCOURAGEMENTS TO BE DERIVED FROM THIS TITLE, IN ITS APPLICATION TO GOD THE SON.

[10802] A banner is a rallying point. So should the Cross be for all Christ's people. Christ is the ensign to which the gathering of the people is to be. Under this should they be found, and nowhere else. As Amalek smote the hindermost of Israel, so will the great spiritual Amalek strike at the soul of any loiterer in the path of service, who does not bear His cross boldly, and, like Joshua and Caleb, follow the Lord fully.

A banner is to distinguish Christ's soldiers. Never be ashamed of your colours. Cleave to them to the last! Encourage and help each other, as Aaron and Hur helped Moses. Hold up each other's hands. Animate each other's hearts. Think what a Captain you are fighting under! The world which tempts you has been overcome by Him. The prince of this world has been judged by Him. Fight on but a little while, and ere long you shall put your feet on the neck of all your enemies, and enjoy the fruit of victory for ever; for the battle is the Lord's. His honour is concerned in it no less than our safety. The Lord will surely be true to Himself, and if we are true to Him, our safety is certain. Let us learn to identify ourselves with Him and His objects. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil," and you shall one day be more than conquerors through the power of Jehovah-Nissi. —*Rev. J. W. Reeve, M.A.*

6

JEHOVAH-ROBI.

("*The Lord my Shepherd*," *Psa.* xxiii. 1.)

I. SCRIPTURAL APPLICATIONS OF THIS TITLE, INDIVIDUALLY AND GENERALLY.

[10803] The image, natural amongst a nation of shepherds, is first employed by Jacob Gen. xlviii. 15, "The Lord which fed me," literally, "My Shepherd;" xlix. 24. There, as here (Psa. xxiii. 1), God is the Shepherd of the *individual;* cf. Psalm cix. 17; still more frequently of His *people*, lxxviii. 52, lxxx. 1, Micah vii. 14, Isaiah lxiii. 11, and especially Ezek. xxxiv; most beautifully and touchingly in Isaiah xl. 11.—*Dean Perowne.*

II. THE TENDER CARE MANIFESTED BY GOD AS OUR SHEPHERD.

[10804] Try to feel, by imagination, what the lonely Syrian shepherd must feel towards the helpless things which are the companions of his daily life, for whose safety he stands in jeopardy every hour, and whose value is measurable to him, not by price, but by his own jeopardy, and then we have reached some notion of the love of God represented in his title of Jehovah-Robi.—*Ibid.*

7

JEHOVAH-ROPHECA.

("*The Lord that healeth thee*," *Exod.* xv. 26.)

I. CHARACTERISTIC ATTRIBUTES OF THE DIVINE HEALER, AS SEEN IN THIS TITLE OF JEHOVAH.

1 Efficiency and practicalness.

[10805] He puts His own omnipotence into the grace by which He heals; and what can resist that grace? He has fathomed the lowest depths of human depravity, and the chain of His grace has reached even unto that. He has measured the utmost distance to which sin has led men to wander away from Him, and His grace has brought them back. There is no heart so hard but He can soften and change it; no mind so benighted but He can enlighten it; and no will so stubborn but He can subdue and control it. And what He undertakes to do He always infallibly accomplishes. Such was the efficiency of His power that in all the cases mentioned of His healing or helping when on earth, He never had occasion to speak twice before the thing that He commanded was done. Even when the boisterous winds and the foaming waves were spoken to, it was not necessary for Him to repeat His command. He needed but to speak once, and "*immediately* there was a great calm."

An old Jewish legend assures us concerning the cloud that conducted Israel through the wilderness, that it not only showed them the way, but also prepared it; it not only led them in the right path, but fitted the way for them to go in; it levelled the mountains and filled up the valleys, and smoothed the rocks, and cleared all the obstacles out of the way. This, of course, is more than the Bible tells us. But whether fact or fancy in reference to the Jews, it is true of God's providence towards His people. His providence does indeed, as Wordsworth says,

"Embrace all accidents, o'erruling them to good."

It is as a practical Healer that we are to regard our covenant God when He makes Himself known as Jehovah-Ropheka.—*Rev. Richard Newton, D.D.*

2 Universality and permanence.

[10806] In many of our hospitals there is a ward for incurables. There are cases which every physician will decline to undertake because he knows that nothing can be done with them. The medical faculty, with all their experience and skill, have nothing to suggest with any hope or prospect of success. But Jehovah-Ropheka knows no such cases. In the hospital of His grace there is no ward for incurables. There are no limits to the range and operation of His wisdom and power. He has not made a specialty of any particular cases. He has power to heal in *all* cases. There is no form of spiritual disease that can be incurable to Him. He is able to heal, as He is to save—unto the uttermost.

When Jesus was on earth He was illustrating all the time His power as a Healer. And they brought to Him sick persons that were taken with divers diseases and torments; the lame, the blind, the deaf, the palsied, the withered, were brought to Him. Those on whom the best physicians of the day had exhausted all their skill, experience, and power without the slightest relief, were brought to Him, "and He healed them all." No earthly physician will undertake both to restore his patient to health, and at the same time to give him the assurance that the disease from which he has suffered shall never return to him. This is a matter quite beyond the reach of ordinary medical ability. But it is not so with our heavenly Healer. He undertakes to make His healing work not only perfect but permanent.—*Ibid.*

8

JEHOVAH-SHALOM.

("*The Lord our Peace*," *Judges* vi. 24.)

I. NATURE, SIGNIFICANCE, AND MANIFESTED INFLUENCE OF THE DIVINE PEACE IMPLIED IN THIS TITLE.

[10807] This does not mean merely that God's

own nature is tranquil, that He dwells in everlasting calm, beyond all trouble, tremor, storm, and tempest; above the strife and agitation of this lower world; its births, and deaths, and graves. That is true; and it is refreshing to turn thought sometimes that way, as we dash through the billowy sea—to think of the everlasting calm in the heart and being of God. But the nearer meaning here is, the God who makes peace where it has been broken, and gives it where it is lost. The God who makes peace between heaven and earth, between law and conscience, between Himself and sinful men. How does He make it? Through "the blood of the everlasting covenant." If there is a way between heaven and earth, an open way for hopes and prayers, for departing souls and descending angels; if troubled consciences are pacified and cleansed; if thunders of broken law are hushed into silence, it is because this blood was shed, because Christ died, "the just for the unjust." If men cease to fret and worry themselves with the troubles of life, for that they believe that all is well; if they lay aside all animosity, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and all evil-speaking, and seek really to love their neighbour as themselves, all this is through the blood of the everlasting covenant. That is the fountain of all true peace.—*A. Raleigh, D.D.*

[10808] To have this peace is to have our wills moving in harmony with the Divine will: it is to have our affections subordinated and controlled by the holy law of God; it is to have our desires elevated, our fears of trouble and death subdued, and our hopes of immortality strong, and bright, and abiding. Yes, it is a comforting influence which this peace imparts. —*Rev. Richard Newton, D.D.*

9

JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH.

("*The Lord is there*," *Ezek.* xlviii. 35.)

I. THE MEANING OF THIS TITLE SUGGESTIVE OF GOD'S PRESENCE CONSTITUTING THE CHIEF GLORY OF HEAVEN.

1 **The nature of the presence.**

(1) *It will be both unveiled and transforming.*

[10809] Here, in this world, we know nothing of God but what He has been pleased to reveal of Himself in His Word. When we close this blessed volume, or look elsewhere for light or knowledge respecting Him, however far-reaching and long-continued our search may be, the only result is that we cannot "by searching find out God." Men were left for four thousand years to see what they could do in this respect, and the issue of the experiment was that "the world by wisdom knew not God." And in view of such an experience how well we may look up and say, in the words of the prophet, "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel!" And even with the open Bible before us, and availing ourselves of all its help, our knowledge of Him is very imperfect now. "Clouds and darkness are round about Him." The clearest views we can get of His character in His life are dim and indistinct. But when we reach that heavenly city, whose name will be Jehovah-Shammah—the Lord is there—this difficulty will be removed. Then, instead of seeing "through a glass darkly, we shall see face to face.' "Then shall we know even as also we are known." And when the redeemed are introduced into that heavenly city, whose name is Jehovah-Shammah—the Lord is there—we are told, "They shall be like Him; for they shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2). Here we see there is a connection instituted between the presence of God vouchsafed to His people there, and the likeness to Him by which they are characterized. Seeing Him as He is, is the reason assigned for their likeness to Him. This shows that there is a transforming power in His presence as there displayed.—*Rev. Richard Newton, D.D.* (*condensed*).

(2) *It will be alike satisfying, progressive, and eternal.*

[10810] We see many objects of beauty and grandeur in the world around us; and we find real pleasure in beholding them. But, however great this pleasure may be, it is still true, as Solomon says, that "The eye is not satisfied with seeing." And there are two things which account for the striking difference that exists between seeing the beauty that appears in this lower world, and "seeing the King in His beauty," as He appears to the saints in glory. We look upon the beauties seen in the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the hills, the ocean; but we are not satisfied with seeing, because they are not ours. They do not belong to us. We cannot appropriate them to our own use. But it will be different when we stand and gaze on the glories of the Divine presence as displayed in heaven. For, no matter how great the beauty and the grandeur of that presence may be, it will be our privilege to know that it all belongs to us. As we gaze upon the glorious Being, before whom we shall be standing, it will be our privilege to point to Him and say, "This God is our God." Jehovah-Shammah, the glorious Lord, in whose presence we are to stand in heaven, is an infinite God. And all the elements of His character are infinite too. And it is this feature of His character which will afford material for ever-fresh development or progress in our knowledge and enjoyment of Him. The light of His presence will shine more and more unto the perfect day. And as we go on, exulting in the joy which that presence gives, we shall realize continually that there are still new beauties for us to see, and still increasing light. We shall be sailing over an ocean that is literally shoreless. And while perfectly satisfied with what we see of God's presence to-day, we shall have the blissful

assurance that to-morrow will only bring out to our view new elements of glory. Here everything is temporary; there nothing will be so. The life given to those who enter this heavenly city will be everlasting life. The kingdom to which they belong is "a kingdom that cannot be moved;" an everlasting kingdom. And everything belonging to that kingdom, its joys, its honours, its relationship, will be everlasting too. As one has well said, "There will be no hands on the clock of eternity, and no shadow on its dial. The very hours of heaven will be measured by the sunshine—not by the shadow." The life to come will be an eternal progression. It will be the life of the soul—life with God, and life like God's. None of the similes that we use of life here will be applicable to the life there. That life is not a bubble, but a substantial reality. It is not a drop, but an ocean always full. It is not like the grass that withereth, but like a tree—not a century tree, but an eternity tree, growing in the paradise of God. It is not like a vapour that passeth away, but like a sun, lighted up as a fountain of unfailing brightness. And what it is when we first enter on it, it will be through all eternity—"life to come."—*Ibid.*

10

JEHOVAH-TSEBAHOTH.

("*The Lord of Hosts*," 1 *Sam.* i. 3; *Isa.* li. 15.)

I. NECESSITY FOR THE DIVINE ASSUMPTION OF THIS MILITARY TITLE, AND THE OBLIGATIONS ON MAN INVOLVED THEREIN.

[10811] "Hosts" refers to war, and generally means a body or bodies of men intended for battle. Is God then at war? Who dare provoke Him? Is it possible that a rebellion exists which necessitates Him to take this title? It suggests most monstrous thoughts concerning this world, between which and its Creator there should be the greatest peace. These beings in flesh and blood—these timid multitudes who would tremble at the sight of a wild beast—have they challenged the Eternal to battle, and trampled across the boundaries He has marked? Yes—this is the most common of all transgressions; nothing is so common as to sin. In consequence of this mainly, our God has been obliged to reveal Himself as a commander of forces against His enemies—forces the mightiest of all His creatures, by whom He chooses to carry on His work. In this war there is great honour; it is most desirable to enlist under His standard, and to feel our hands bent in this direction with all zeal. It is a great idea that He made all the hosts that He commands. The commanders of the earth have beings like themselves under them, and then obedience is temporary; but this "Lord of Hosts" spoke them out of nothing into being. "His own eternal essence lives the same." He could retire into solitude in which He dwelt from eternity, and enjoy the highest felicity. Happy they who, when asked what army they belong to, can answer "The Lord of Hosts!" Now, if He is the Creator of all beings, it follows that all should obey Him. Their first duty is to devote themselves to God. Their first impulse should be, "What can we do for Him?" We should listen to His voice; should go out and act for Him as long as we can; act for Him, so that "whether living or dying we may be the Lord's." Less than this it would be miserable to live, and dreadful to die.

II. THE VARIED DEGREES IN THE LORD'S ARMY, HIS MANIFEST POWER IN HIS CREATURES, AND THE WARNING CONVEYED IN THE CONSIDERATION OF THE FINAL GATHERING OF THE HOSTS.

[10812] Angels and spirits who never dwelt in bodies are in the first ranks of the Lord's hosts. We may presume that they are inconceivably numerous, and their power amazingly great; there can be no comparison between them and men. We may form an idea of them perhaps nearly as well as of God. Probably the highest conception we can form of God is no more than may properly belong to angels. We have very imperfect ideas of perfect wisdom and goodness. The fallen angels are still under God's power, but he does not condescend to own them as His "hosts." As deserters, they are consigned to a prison-house of darkness, and will never be restored to their dignity. The heavenly bodies are sometimes called the "hosts" of God. We are told of their influence on the earth; "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera." Now think of them, beyond all number: the more the means of discovering them, the more boundless they are. They give us great ideas of that God who may one day displace them and create new glories to amaze the contemplation of His servants. God presides over the armies of mortal men; His name is often in their mouths, in every connexion except that of devotion. Amid their armies he is causing their battles to end in a manner conducive to His glory. We are glad to see some remarkable interventions; but, doubtless, all are under His direction. Our God can turn small insignificant creatures into armies—contemptible when compared with mortals—but in the Divine hand how dreadful, as in Egypt. God will raise vast "hosts" at the last day. How many have laid down their arms in the dust! God knows where they are gone, and will raise them up. How astonishing to see all the vast multitudes brought into a company of immortals; ourselves placed there! Such a sight the world never saw; there, in a sense, will be the "hosts" of God. Not one presuming rebel will be there, whatever despair and distress many may feel. Consider how we should stand there! Think what requisites are necessary to mingle with that great company—great indeed, but not so large as for any one to lose themselves; each

will be distinguishable. The whole will be divided into different classes. It is for us to consider what qualifications are necessary that we may be added to the blessed company. To join ourselves to that company *now* will be our only resource and comfort in that day.

11

JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU.

("*The Lord our Righteousness*," *Jer.* xxiii. 6; cf. xxxiii. 16.)

I. The Author of the Righteousness here considered.

1 Its application to the Saviour of men.

[10813] "And this is the name whereby He shall be called—The Lord our Righteousness." The phrase rendered in our version "the Lord," is in the original, Jehovah. But in the Godhead, represented by this solemn name, Jehovah, there is a Trinity of persons. The precise point now before us is to determine which of the three persons in that holy Trinity is here intended? It is important to settle this point. And it is not difficult to do so. We have only to glance cursorily at two or three passages, and we have Scripture interpreting itself here in the most clear and satisfactory manner.

Look, for instance, at the verse immediately preceding the text. Here we find it written, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up into David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth." Then follow the words of the text: "And this is the name whereby," &c. Thus we see from the connection in which our text is found that the person here called "Jehovah our Righteousness," is the same as "the righteous Branch, the prosperous King," promised to be raised up unto David. This proves that the Jehovah of our text is Jehovah-Jesus. Isaiah (xi. 1), in speaking of Him says, "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. Ezekial (xxxiv. 29) calls Him, "the Plant of renown." Zechariah (vi. 12, 15) speaking of Him says, "Behold the man whose name is the Branch; He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and He shall sit, and rule upon His throne, and He shall be a priest upon His throne." We know, then, that the Jehovah who is to be our righteousness must be Jehovah-Jesus, because He is the Branch, who was to be raised up unto David. And He is the prosperous King, who was to sit on David's throne. For when the angel Gabriel foretold His birth, he applied this very prophecy to Him saying, "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever."—*Rev. Richard Newton, D.D.*

II. Its Nature and Characteristics.

1 It is marked by graciousness, perfection, and uniformity.

[10814] It has its foundation altogether in the sovereign, unmerited grace of God. It was God's good pleasure alone that ever a plan for working out such a righteousness was devised. God was under no obligation to devise or carry out such a plan. The honour of His name would not have been tarnished, nor the integrity of His righteous judgment compromised, if He had stood aloof when man sinned, and had allowed the race of men, as He did the race of angels to go on and meet the everlasting consequences of their transgressions. God's perfect law was the standard by which this righteousness was to be measured; and it came fully up to that standard. It was the scrutiny of God's holy and penetrating eye to which this righteousness was subjected. He examined it. He weighed it in the balance of the heavenly sanctuary and declared Himself well pleased with it. How perfect that must be in which His penetrating eye could see no flaw! How perfect that must be which He pronounces faultless —"without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing!" There is no mark or shadow of imperfection about it. It is because of His connection with this righteousness that God the Father loves His Son with a love that is unspeakable. What the righteousness of Christ is to one of His people it is to them all. None of them are accepted on any other ground than this; and all who stand on this ground are on an equality before God, as to the foundation on which they rest, or as to that which constitutes their title to heaven. It is the righteousness of Christ which constitutes this title. This righteousness is never given to any in parts or parcels, but always as a whole. The soul that has any interest in this righteousness, has an interest in it all.—*Ibid.*

SECTION XIII.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

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(All classifications of above, except upon a *dual* principle, as adopted below, are unsatisfactory.)

DIVISION OF TOPICS ILLUSTRATED.

A.—INTRODUCTION. PAGE

THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES GENERALLY CONSIDERED ... 15

B.—ATTRIBUTES EXPRESSIVE OF HIS ESSENTIAL NATURE.

SPIRITUALITY ... 30
INFINITY ... 32
IMMUTABILITY ... 44
PERFECTION (including Holiness) ... 49

C.—ATTRIBUTES EXPRESSIVE OF HIS ESSENTIAL RELATIONS.

1. AS SUPREME RULER OF THE UNIVERSE.
Sovereignty ... 53
Incomparableness ... 59

2. AS MORAL RULER OF THE UNIVERSE.
Wisdom ... 70
Justice (including Holy Anger) ... 74
Love ... 85

CLASSIFIED CONTENTS, SECTION XIII.

The Divine Attributes illustrated, arranged under their respective Divisions and Subdivisions, with consecutive Numbers for facility of reference.

(See Sectional Index, p. 521, and General Index at the end of last volume.)

	PAGE	NO
A.—INTRODUCTION.		
THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES GENERALLY CONSIDERED	15	1
B.—ATTRIBUTES EXPRESSIVE OF HIS ESSENTIAL NATURE.		
SPIRITUALITY, *including*—	30	2
Invisibility	32	3
INFINITY, *including*—	33	4
Eternity	34	5
UNSEARCHABLENESS	39	6
IMMUTABILITY	44	7
PERFECTION, *including*—	49	8
Holiness	50	9
C.—ATTRIBUTES EXPRESSIVE OF HIS ESSENTIAL NATURE.		
1. AS SUPREME RULER OF THE UNIVERSE.		
SOVEREIGNTY, *including*—	53	10
Majesty	56	11
Gloriousness	57	12
INCOMPARABLENESS, *including*—		
"None before Him," "None beside Him," "None GOD but He."		
Omnipotence	59	13
Omnipresence	63	14
Omniscience	67	15
2. AS MORAL RULER OF THE UNIVERSE.		
WISDOM	70	16
JUSTICE, *including*—	74	17
Faithfulness	79	18
Truth	81	19
LOVE, *including*—	85	20
Compassion	88	21
Goodness	89	22
Graciousness	92	23
Gentleness	95	24
Jealousy	98	25
Longsuffering	100	26
Mercifulness	102	27
Patience	105	28

SECTION XIII.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

DIVISION A.

INTRODUCTION.

1

INTRODUCTORY.

I. Nature of the Divine Attributes variously considered.

1 As conceptions of the idea of God in His relation to the world and human thought.

[10815] According to Aquinas, "the name of God does not express the Divine essence as it is, as the name of man expresses in its signification the essence of man as it is; that is to say, by signifying the definition which declares the essence." The ground of this distinction was the conviction that finite things cannot indicate the nature of the infinite God otherwise than by imperfect analogies.

[10816] The attributes of God must be represented to our minds, so far as they can be represented at all, under the similitude of the corresponding attributes of man. Yet we cannot conceive them as existing in God in the same manner as they exist in man. In man they are many, in God they must be one. In man they are related to and limit each other; in God there can be no relation and no limitation. In man they exist only as capacities at times carried into action; in God, who is *purus actus*, there can be no distinction between faculty and operation. Hence the Divine attributes may properly be called mysterious; for, though we believe in their co-existence, we are unable to conceive the manner of their co-existence.—*Quarterly Review.*

[10817] The attributes of God are only, as Fénélon has said, the *names* by which we distinguish the different faces of the Divine unity, when we consider it in its relation to this world. It is thus we call Him *wise* when we see the marvellous accommodation of means and ends; *good*, when we think of the abundance of His gifts; *just*, when we compare our merits and demerits with our actual or future destinies.—*P. Janet.*

2 As forming the substance of the Divine character.

[10818] No being or essence is inconceivable apart from its attributes and qualities. All phenomena, whether of mind or matter, are manifestations of some underlying substance only thus known to it. What is true of all other objects of our knowledge is true also of the Highest. The Eternal unclothed in His attributes is not a definite object of thought at all, but the entire Divine Essence in the assemblage of His qualities predicated of it. The Bible never distinguished the being of God from the name or names that reveal His being. —*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

[10819] To make the several qualities of the Divine nature depend only on our conceptions of them is to lose the Divine nature altogether. The discussions of the schoolmen, revived of late with special reference to the knowableness of God, are not without a profound interest. The Nominalists, who regarded general terms as merely names of abstractions formed in our minds, effaced the real distinctions in the Divine attributes; to them God was in the simplicity of His essence *actus purus*, thought and act, act and power being one in Him, and the perfections of the Divine nature existing only in our thoughts, in which we assign to God something that is the cause of what we find in ourselves. The Realists, on the other hand, who regarded general terms as representing real objective existences, clung to the reality in God of the various perfections He assumes. In every age those who hold with them think of God as really invested with His attributes in perfection, as His creatures are invested with them imperfectly.—*Ibid.*

[10820] The Divine attributes are not the mere product of our intellect in reflecting on God, but exist in essential objectivity in God,

and will exist though the activity of the distinguishing human intellect exist not.—*Rothe.*

[10821] The infinite nature of God does not, in fact, present itself to the mind as a single idea, but as an assemblage of properties or qualities, to each of which the idea of infinity is attached. The different wants of which we are conscious, as limited, or sinful, beings; the different circumstances in which we are placed; the different points of view from which creation may be regarded, modify the aspects under which we represent to ourselves the one living and true God, and thus give rise to the doctrine of the Divine attributes. In conceiving God as the infinitely wise, good, powerful, &c., we confine our attention, in each case, to one aspect of the Divine essence; we take a partial view of it suggested by existing circumstances; and because a partial, necessarily an imperfect one: but such a view as alone is of any religious value. There is no food for faith in the abstract ideas of the Infinite and the Absolute. How this Infinite Being is affected, what the relations He sustains, towards us, are the points with which we are practically concerned; a God of attributes can alone be the object of worship.—*E. A. Litton, M.A.*

3 As the same in kind with, although different in degree from their correlations in man.

[10822] It has been maintained that the attributes of Deity are of a nature altogether different from the mental and moral faculties of the human mind; and that the analogy, if there be any, is very remote, and has in it no more of real resemblance "than the map of China has to China itself." But let us see. What is volition but the self-determinating act of a free mind, whether in the creature or in the Creator? What is the difference in truth, in faithfulness, in holiness, as they exist in the mind of man? Is not truth the conformity of our perceptions to things? Is not faithfulness the conformity of our purposes, dispositions, and actions to truth? Is not holiness freedom from and aversion to moral evil, and love to all that is good? Are not these principles essentially the same in all ages, in all minds? Do they part with their essence, or become changed in their nature, by existing in minds of different order and capacity? We conceive they do not. Whether they exist in the mind of man, angel, or God, they are essentially the same in their nature. Here is the only difference: in the creature they are limited; in the Creator they are infinite; in man they are mixed with infirmity, and often with qualities of an opposite kind; but in Jehovah their lustre is untarnished by any alloy—they exist in absolute perfection, in unchanging harmony and beauty; they are united to a mind of infinite capacity and unchanging rectitude. Gold is gold, whether in the rude, heterogeneous mass of native ore, or in the pure and refined ingot; whether in the diminutive quantity of a grain, or a ponderous, massive globe.—*W. Cooke, D.D.*

[10823] Justice or love in an infinite Being is not a different kind of thing from justice or love in a finite being, any more than the roundness of a large circle is different from the roundness of a small one. When we speak of one as being juster than another, we only mean that he approaches nearer the realization of the quality, just as we might say an orange was rounder than a lemon. We mean that he values justice more highly in his mind, or practises it more uniformly in his conduct, or that his greater knowledge saves him from error in applying it; we do not mean that he has a different idea of justice from what the other has.—*J. Rae.*

[10824] If they were different, then the goodness which appear in the life of man would be illusive, and we should be left in a world of forms—a phantasmal world, in which the ethical is not real, and is itself devoid of sincerity.—*E. Mulford, LL.D.*

II. Their Scholastic Divisions according to Authoritative Writers on Systematic Theology.

[10825] There have been many divisions of the attributes of God. The scholastic theology set forth the attributes in three ways: (1) By *causality*, in which all the perfections we observe in creation, and especially in man, are necessarily to be attributed to their Creator; (2) by *negation*, under which the imperfections of created beings are kept out of the conception of God; (3) by *analogy* or *eminence*, by which the highest degree of all known perfections is attributed to God. Accordingly the attributes of God were classed as *negative* and *positive*—the negative being such as remove from him whatever is imperfect in creatures; such are infinity, immutability, immortality, &c.; while the positive assert some perfection in God, which is in and of Himself, and which in the creatures, in any measure, is from him. This distinction is now mostly discarded. Among modern writers Dr. Samuel Clarke sums up the attributes as mainly referable to these three leading ones: omnipotence, omniscience, and perfect goodness. Others distinguish them into *absolute* and *relative*: absolute are such as belong to the essence of God, as Jehovah, Jah, &c.; relative ones are such as may be ascribed to Him in time, with relation to His creatures, as Creator, Governor, Preserver, Redeemer, &c. Others, again, divide them into *communicable* and *incommunicable* attributes. The communicable are those which can be imparted to the creature, as goodness, holiness, wisdom, &c.; the incommunicable are such as cannot be imparted, as independence, immutability, immensity, and eternity. Another division makes one class of *natural* attributes; *e.g.*, eternity, immensity, &c.: and another of *moral*; *e.g.*, holiness, goodness, &c.

[10826] Holy Scripture, condescending to our weakness, alloweth us to take up as it were in several parcels what we cannot compass at once; and in contemplating the attributes to conceive some under the notion of Divine properties incommunicable to creatures, such as are immensity, independency, eternity, simplicity, self-sufficiency, all-sufficiency, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence. Others under that of Divine faculties, such are understanding, will, and memory ascribed to God. It gives us leave to look at some as Divine affections, such are His love, hatred, anger, grief, and delight. At others as Divine virtues, such are His mercy, justice, patience, faithfulness, holiness, wisdom, &c.; And at other some as Divine excellences resulting out of all the former, such are majesty, blessedness, and glory.—*Arrowsmith.*

III. Their Scientific Discriminations, according to the later German Theologians.

1 According to Boehme.

[10827] Böhme distinguishes the attributes into those which refer to the *world in general*, and those which refer to the *moral* world in particular.

2 According to Schleiermacher.

[10828] Schleiermacher makes two classes: (1) Attributes which refer to the *universal* sense of dependence on God, viz., omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence; (2) attributes which refer to the Christian sense of redemption and of dependence on God, viz., holiness, justice, wisdom, love. Schleiermacher's method is, of course, peculiar. It is based on the characteristic principle of his system, that all religion is founded on a sense of dependence, and all theology consists in what that sense of dependence teaches us. He does not treat of the Divine attributes in any one place, but here and there, as they come up according to his plan. Our sense of dependence does not awaken in our consciousness a feeling of opposition to God's eternity, omnipotence, omnipresence, or omniscience. These, therefore, are treated of in one place. But we, as dependent creatures, are conscious of opposition to God's holiness and righteousness. These, therefore, belong to another head. And as this opposition is removed through Christ, we are brought into relation to God's grace or love, and to His wisdom. —*Dr. Hodge.*

3 According to Pelt.

[10829] Pelt classes them as (1) attributes of God as absolute *cause* (*a*) in *Himself*—eternal, infinite, self-sufficient; (*b*) in relation to the *world*—omnipotent, omnipresent: (2) attributes of God as the original and *self-revealing will*—good, holy, just, benevolent, &c.

4 According to Rothe.

[10830] Rothe's scheme of the attributes is thus set forth by Babut in the "Bulletin of the Revue Chrétienne:" 1. *Absolute* or *immanent attributes.* (*a*) Self-sufficiency of God as a pure and absolute Being. (*b*) Majesty: the Divine will. (*c*) Blessedness. 2. *Relative attributes*, implied in God's relation to the universe; the *love* of God is the source of creation and being, while the *essence* of God is expressed in infinity, immensity, immutability. The *personality* of God is manifested to the world in goodness, wrath, grace; the *intelligence* of God in omniscience, holiness, truth. The *will* of God is manifested in omnipotence, justice, faithfulness; and the Divine *nature* is manifested in the one attribute of omnipotence.

IV. Their Various Designations.

[10831] They are called "attributes," because God attributes them to, and affirms them of, Himself. "Properties," because we conceive them proper to God, and such as can be predicated only of Him, so that by them we distinguish Him from all other beings. "Perfections," because they are the several representations of that one perfection which is Himself. "Names" and "terms," because they express and signify something of His essence. "Notions," because they are so many apprehensions of His being as we conceive of Him in our minds.—*Lawson, "Theo-Politica."*

V. Their Place in Theological Science.

[10832] The study of the Divine attributes lies at the foundation of theology, which is the doctrine of God in Himself and in His universal relations. The whole superstructure must be reared on the several names and perfections of the Most High. There is not a single truth in dogmatics or ethics which might not be assigned to its natural place under the several heads of the attributes of God. Just as their rays are diffused and blended throughout the Scripture, so are they more or less interwoven with all the topics of theology.—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

VI. Their Joint Characteristics.

1 Eternity and infinitude.

[10833] To suppose that any of God's attributes were derived, would be to suppose that He was dependent upon something which is incompatible with His necessary existence. To suppose that they had a beginning would be to suppose that there was a prior eternity in which He existed without possessing them, which is the same thing as to undeify Him. To suppose that any of His attributes can ever cease to exist is absurd, because it is to suppose Him to cease to be what He essentially is—the self-existent, independent, and immutable Jehovah. If His existence be essential and eternal, so must all His attributes be.—*W. Cooke, D.D.*

[10834] To deny the eternal exercise of the

Divine attributes is to suppose that God was eternally in a state of inactivity; for if the exercise of His attributes be not eternal, there must have been a period when they began their action; and if there was a period when their action began, there must have been a prior eternity in which they did not operate; and this involves the most absurd consequences. Thus, if this supposition be applied to His intelligence, it affirms there was an eternity in which the Divine Being knew nothing. If applied to His power, it affirms that there was an eternity in which He did nothing. If applied to His love, it affirms that there was an eternity in which He loved nothing.—*Ibid.*

[10835] The attributes of such a Being, suppose His reality to be proved, must be adequate to the magnitude, extent, and multiplicity of His operations: which are not only vast beyond comparison with those performed by any other power, but, so far as respects our conceptions of them, infinite, because they are unlimited on all sides.—*Paley.*

[10836] With the notion of the *qualitative* Infinite, there may co-exist, without contradiction, as many infinites as there are attributes. Knowledge and power belong to spheres which interfere not in any possible way the one with the other. They cannot come into collision. Without contradiction power may be unlimited, and knowledge may also be unlimited. Veracity, rectitude, love, and a thousand infinites besides, co-existing at the same time, are not impossible to our thought. Passing from quantity to quality, from gross amount to attributes, it is no limitation of unlimited power that it is not knowledge, and no limitation of unlimited knowledge that it is not power. It is not in the nature of things that these qualities should be interpenetrable or convertible, and that the separate independent existence of the one should be incompatible with that of the other. In like manner, in a lower sphere, the sphere of the finite, it is no limitation to mind that it cannot walk, and no limitation to truth or love that you cannot measure them by a scale of inches. These things are simply impossible.—*J. Young, LL.D.*

[10837] All the attributes are in God in the highest degree, yea, beyond all degrees. In men or angels they are limited, but immensity, like a golden thread, runs through all the Divine properties. God's understanding is infinite (Psa. cxlvii. 5), so is His justice, mercy, and all the rest. They have no bounds but His own will and pleasure. He never put forth so much power, but He could put forth more if He pleased; He never exercised so much patience, but He could exercise more if He would.—*Swinnock.*

2 Incomprehensibleness.

[10838] O abyss of divine perfections! How admirable art thou, O Lord, who possessest in one onely perfection the excellency of all perfection, in so excellent sort, that none is able to comprehend it but Thyself!—*St. Francis De Sales.*

[10839] The attributes are but alphabetic letters. We spell a few simple sentences. But the greatness, the majesty, the scope, the variety that is in Him we cannot compute. It will break upon us when we shall see Him as He is, and not through the imperfections of human analogies and experiences. I thank God that there is so much that is unknowable. When Columbus discovered America he did not know that he had discovered a continent, but he did not know its contents, what the mountain ranges were, nor what or where the rivers were, nor the lakes, nor the inhabitants. Yet he did know that he had made the discovery of the continent. And I know God so that I walk with Him as with a companion; I whisper to Him, I believe that He imparts thoughts to me and feelings, and yet when you ask me: "Can you describe Him? Can you make an inventory of His attributes?" I cannot. I thank God He so transcends anything we know of Him, that God is unknowable. People say some may believe this, but can you prove it? Suppose I were to have said in my youthful days to the woman of my choice, my honoured wife, "I love you," and she handed me a slate and pencil and said, "Be kind enough to demonstrate that, will you?" She would not have become my wife if she had. Are not the finest feelings that you know those that are unsusceptible of demonstration? Certainly, by analysis, description, language. Are not those things that make you not only different from the animal, but from the men round about you, that lift you into a higher atmosphere, do they not transcend any evidence that the sense can give? And is not that the instruction that runs through all of Paul's writings?—*Beecher.*

3 Comprehensive and harmonious unity.

[10840] The nature of God reveals itself in His attributes. If God were the simply One (τὸ ἁπλῶς ἕν), the mystic abyss, in which every form of determination is distinguished, there would be nothing to be known in the unity. But the living God reveals the unity of His nature by a variety of determinations of His essence or attributes.—*Martensen.*

[10841] It is through His attributes that God is to be known by men; in their totality they constitute His name or revealed personality; and their combined lustre is that "glory of the Lord" which is above the heavens, but of which the radiance has been suffered to shine down upon men that all flesh may see it together.—*British Quarterly Review, Nov.*, 1852.

[10842] Their unity in variety is only the full revelation of the Divine Nature in itself; their variety in unity is the real authoritative and adequate revelation of it to man. They are one in God, yet many to us.—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

[10843] The Divine attributes find their harmonizing completion and unity in love—love which is not merely one single aspect of the Divine essence, but that essence in its fulness. Indeed, all the Divine attributes are but more precise definitions of love, and are combined in love, as in their centre and vital principle. Wisdom is its intelligence; might its productivity; the entire natural creation and the entire revelation of righteousness in history are means by which it attains its teleological aims.—*Martensen.*

[10844] Though it be most undoubtedly true that the sovereignty of God's power and dominion over His creatures is so absolute and unlimited, that if we consider that only we must acknowledge He might create a man or an angel and annihilate him presently; yea, that He might, if He so pleased, raise up many thousand worlds of intelligent and innocent creatures into being in one moment, and throw them into nothing again the very next moment. Yet how unwarrantably should we maim the notion of God, if we should conceive of Him only according to one attribute, secluding the consideration of the rest? How misshapen an idea of Him should we bear in our minds? And how would it deform the face of Providence, and spoil the decorum of His administrations, if they should be the effects of one single attribute only, the other having no influence on the affairs of the world? . . . Nothing is ever done unworthy of Him, who is at once both perfectly merciful, and just, and wise, and powerful, and hath all perfections eminently comprehended and united in His own most simple Being.—*Howe.*

[10845] A perfectly righteous Being must be merciful, because He must desire that all other beings were righteous, and to attain this is the highest mercy. And, conversely, a perfectly merciful Being must be righteous, because that which mercy or grace desires is the highest welfare of all, and this can be attained only through righteousness. The truth that justice and mercy are from the same root in the Divine nature appears to be obscured in modern Christendom, where mercy is too often thought of as opposed to justice, and needing some artificial reconciliation with it. But it was understood in Israel of old. "To Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, for Thou renderest to every man according to his work," said the Psalmist: that is to say, "Because justice is Thine, therefore is mercy Thine also."—*J. J. Murphy.*

[10846] But how art Thou also at the same time compassionate and impassible? For if Thou art impassible Thou dost not suffer with us; and if Thou dost not suffer with us, Thy heart is not pained with sympathy for our misery, for this is to be compassionate. But if Thou art not compassionate, whence so great consolation to the miserable? How, therefore, O Lord, art Thou compassionate and yet not compassionate, unless that Thou art compassionate in relation to us, but not as implying any change in Thee? Thou art, indeed, compassionate to relieve, but not to experience our miseries. For when Thou hast respect unto our miseries, we feel the effect of Thy compassion, but no change is felt by Thee. Thou art therefore compassionate, because thou dost save the miserable, and dost spare Thine offending subjects; and Thou art not compassionate, in so far as no compassion for misery can produce any change in Thee.—*St. Anselm.*

[10847] When the sunbeams shine through a yellow glass they are yellow, a red glass they are red. When the sun shines on clay it hardens it; on wax, it softens it; on sweet flowers, it draweth out their fragrance; on ditches, it draweth out their ill odours, yet it is the same sun and the same influences; the difference lieth in the objects and the effects. So God, who is always working in the world, when He worketh towards the wicked in punishing, He is righteous; towards the godly in saving, He is merciful; yet still the same immutable God.—*Swinnock.*

VII. The Facts conditioning their Exercise.

1 Creation.

[10848] It seems a thing in itself fit, proper, and desirable that the glorious attributes of God, which consist in a sufficiency for certain acts or effects, should be exerted in the production of such effects, as might manifest the infinite power, wisdom, righteousness, goodness, &c., which are in God. If the world had not been created, these atttibutes never would have had any exercise. The power of God, which is a sufficiency in Him to produce great effects, must for ever have been dormant and useless as to any effect. The Divine wisdom and prudence would have had no exercise in any wise contrivance, any prudent proceeding, or disposal of things, for there would have been no objects of contrivance or disposal. The same might be observed of God's justice, goodness, and truth. Indeed, God might have known as perfectly that he possessed these attributes, if they had never been exerted or expressed in any effect. But then if the attributes, which consist in a sufficiency of correspondent effects, are in themselves excellent, the exercise of them must likewise be excellent.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

2 Fallen humanity.

[10849] The perfections of God, in order to be fully known, must be seen, carried out into actual operation; and operating too under such circumstances as to prove them to be absolutely infinite. But this exhibition could not be made while none but unfallen beings existed. A large family, living under the eye of a father whom not one of them has ever offended, may have a considerable knowledge of his character; yet

it is clear that that knowledge must be imperfect and defective. They may know that he is true, and just, and good; but they cannot tell to what extent his truth, his justice, his goodness may reach, because nothing has ever occurred which could afford an occasion of trying, of limiting, or restraining, the exercise of these qualities. But let some individual of the family offend him, and then, in his treatment of that individual, all the rest of the family, as well as the offender himself, will obtain a new view, and consequently a more extended knowledge of his character. While the prodigal son dwelt beneath his father's roof, he knew well the goodness of his father's heart; but he was far from knowing the whole extent of that goodness. And so with the commencement of moral evil, whatever was its origin, commenced a new and glorious development of the Divine perfections. God was seen in a new relation, and an additional view of His character was given. Something was known of Him that was not known before.—*Marcus Dods.*

3 The twofold nature of Christ.

[10850] The Divine attributes must be contemplated as they are manifested and made incarnate in Christ. He is the sum of Divine attributes in human nature. We have no God save as revealed in Jesus, and we shall never know God save as revealed in the face of His incarnate Son. In Him we see the attributes which connect the Supreme with the creature, the omni-attributes under a most blessed and peculiar aspect. In Him, reflected from His face and through His work, we see the glory of the perfections which bring the Divine into relation with human redemption from sin (2 Cor. iii. 18).—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

[10851] I cannot learn God's holiness from the stars or the mountains. I cannot read His faithfulness in the ocean or the cataract. Even His wisdom, and power, and love are but faintly portrayed in the torn and disjointed fragments of this fallen creation. And seeing, therefore, that Deity, invisible as to His essence, can become visible as to His attributes only through some direct manifestation not found in His material workmanship, God sent His well-beloved Son to assume our flesh; and this Son, exhibiting in and through His humanity as much of His Divine properties as creatureship could admit, became unto mankind "the image of the invisible God." He did not, in strict matter of fact, reveal to mankind that there is a God. But He made known to them, most powerfully, and most abundantly, the nature and attributes of God. The beams of divinity, passing through His humility as through a softening medium, shone upon the earth with a lustre sufficiently tempered to allow of their irradiating, without scorching and consuming. And they who gazed on this mysterious person, moving in His purity and His benevolence through the lines of a depraved and scornful population, saw not indeed God—"for no man hath seen God at any time," and spirit must necessarily evade the searchings of sense—but they saw God imaged with the most thorough fidelity, and His every property embodied, so far as the immaterial can discover itself through the material.—*H. Melvill, B.D.*

VIII. A Disposition for Communion considered as a General Attribute.

1 The evidence from reason.

[10852] By communion we mean the affectionate and reciprocal intercourse of one mind with another. That a disposition for such intercourse essentially exists in the mind of the Deity, may be argued from the fact that it is an excellence which he has implanted in the nature of all intelligent beings. That there does dwell in the mind of man a disposition for communion, all will admit. What, indeed, is society but the living evidence and development of this disposition? What is speech but the vehicle through which this disposition puts itself forth in audible words? What is writing but a more diffusive vehicle by which man pours his thoughts, desires, emotions, and affections into the souls of his fellow-men, with a copiousness, and to an extent, which give a kind of ubiquity to his presence? It is, in fact, the expression of the vehement desire of the mind for fellowship with mind—the disposition for communion breaking through the bounds of limited location, and seeking to gratify itself by intercourse with kindred spirits in every hemisphere and in every age. Were this disposition to become extinct, the whole framework of society would immediately become dissolved; and every man, fleeing from and repelled by his fellow-man, would seek seclusion, and live for no one, care for no one, but himself. It is the existence of this disposition which erects the social structure, which forms every family, and builds up every community. The evidence of man's disposition for communion is too palpable and diversified to require amplification. It connects itself with every instinct, unites itself with every ennobling affection, gives a complexion to every habit, and is an element in every cup of felicity. Seeing, then, that this disposition is essentially inherent in the human mind, the same disposition, being an excellence, must dwell in the mind of the Creator. There is no excellence dwells in man but it is the reflection of a corresponding excellence in God Himself. To suppose the contrary would be to suppose that the Creator has endowed the creature with perfections which He Himself does not possess, which is a palpable absurdity and contradiction. The Creator may be supposed to withhold from the nature of the creature various perfections which He himself possesses, but it cannot be supposed He could give to the creature any measure of an excellence of which Himself is destitute. Indeed, the absolute perfection of His nature excludes the possibility of the absence of any excellence.

It comprehends every perfection in kind, as well as in unlimited degree. The existence, therefore, of any excellence in the created spirit is an *à posteriori* proof that it dwells in infinite perfection in the Father of spirits.—*Wm. Cooke, D.D.*

2 The verdict of reason sustained by the Holy Scriptures.

(1) *The scriptural fact, that man is made in God's image, involves in the Creator a disposition for communion.*

[10853] There is much implied in the scriptural representation of our spiritual nature. It refers us to every excellency in our own spirit, as a manifestation or type of some corresponding perfection in "the Father of spirits." And, indeed, this appellation, "*the Father of spirits*," involves the same interesting truth. It is a phraseology never applied to express the relation between God and the inferior animals. God is *their* Creator, but he is "OUR FATHER." He gave the brute species, as well as us, an *existence;* but he has given to our souls His *likeness* and *image*, and is, therefore, emphatically "the Father of spirits." Such language denotes *resemblance*—such a resemblance, in some respects, as exists between beings having a similar nature. God is a Spirit, so is the human soul; and as that soul was made in the image and likeness of its Author, it must possess many properties and attributes which correspond with Deity. Hence a certain author asks, "Whence come the conceptions under which we include that august name (God)? Whence do we derive our knowledge of the attributes and perfections which constitute the Supreme Being?" I answer, We derive them from our own souls. The Divine attributes are first developed in ourselves, and thence transferred to our Creator. The idea of God, sublime and awful as it is, is the idea of our own spiritual nature purified and enlarged to infinity. In ourselves are the elements of the Divinity. God, then, does not sustain a figurative resemblance to man. It is the resemblance of a parent to a child, the likeness of a kindred nature.—*Ibid.*

[10854] We call God a Mind. He has revealed Himself as a Spirit. But what do we know of mind but through the unfolding of this principle in our own breasts? That unbounded spiritual energy which we call God is conceived by us only through consciousness, through the knowledge of ourselves. We ascribe thought or intelligence to the Deity as one of His most glorious attributes. And what means this language? These terms we have framed to express operations or faculties of our own souls. The infinite light would be for ever hidden from us, did not kindred rays dawn and brighten within us.—*Channing.*

[10855] There is no created object which affords so full and clear a manifestation of the perfections and character of God as the excellences which God has implanted in the human soul. If, therefore, a disposition for communion dwells in the mind of the infinite Spirit, we should expect to find a corresponding disposition inherent in the human spirit. Indeed, the truths we are now considering involve correlative propositions. They reflect evidence upon each other. So that, assume which we may in the premises, it involves the other in conclusion. If, on the other hand, we assume, as the Scriptures teach, that there is, in the Father of spirits, a disposition for communion, it follows that the same disposition should be found in the human spirit, because it was formed in the Creator's image and likeness. Or if, on the other hand, we assume as a truth that there is in man a disposition for communion, it follows that a similar disposition must dwell in the Deity, for the reason already assigned. Were it otherwise, there would not be likeness, but great dissimilarity. If in God there were this disposition, springing from the fulness of His benevolent nature, but in man there was no such disposition; or, on the other hand, if in man there were this disposition, springing from an inherent affection, but in God there were the total absence of any such disposition, the two natures would be exceedingly unlike, and the assertion that man was created in God's likeness must be given up. We can hardly conceive of two minds more unlike each other than the diverse natures which the possession or non-possession of this disposition would involve. The one complacently delighting to communicate its thoughts and affections; the other averse to all such intercourse. The one relishing the society of a kindred spirit, and loving it with ardent affection; the other adverse either to receiving or reciprocating any such affectionate intercourse. It is quite evident that two such minds must be most unlike each other in natural qualities, and that the most opposite moral qualities must spring from these contrary dispositions. The one disposition conforms to the nature of the misanthropist, and the other to the philanthropist. The one is fitted for the greatest development of the malign tempers; the other must delight in the exercise and development of the most benevolent affections. Such a disparity of nature is totally incompatible with intimate resemblance; and, therefore, he who admits man to have been formed in God's image and likeness must admit that, if a disposition for communion dwells in the spirit of the creature, if must dwell in infinite plenitude and perfection in the Creator.—*Wm. Cooke, D.D.*

3 The evidence of all spiritual religion.

(1) *Which consists chiefly in the exercise of this disposition.*

[10856] All the spiritual religion is grafted on this principle. The essence of religion is love—love to our fellow-creatures and love to God. Love to a fellow-creature is such affection for him as delights to hold communion with him. Love to God is the same affection, exciting the same disposition in a still higher degree. Under

its influence the affections go out towards Him, the thoughts dwell upon Him, the soul delights in Him, and all the religious exercises of the soul are so many acts of communion with Him. What is prayer but the utterance of the soul's desires after God, its yearnings for more of His presence, His grace, and blessing. What is praise but the effusion of the soul's gratitude and affection? What is adoration but the soul's utterance of solemn reverence and devotedness? What is confession but the soul's contrite acknowledgment of sin and anxious return to Him? What is faith but the exercise of the soul's filial confidence in God's veracity and goodness? What is hope but the outgoings of its desires and expectations towards God? What is joy, but the soul's exultant delight in Him? In all these and every other religious exercise, there is the communion of man's spirit with the spirit of his Maker; it is the fellowship of the created mind with the eternal and uncreated Mind. This is religion, and it is the religion which God requires and commands. "My son, give me thine heart." In the absence of this fellowship there is no religion; and without it the profession of religion is but formality and hypocrisy, which God despises and condemns. No external rites, no well-ordered ceremonials, no imposing pageantry, can be a substitute for this. Even morality and good works, apart from this fellowship with God, are of no avail; so essential is communion with God to the very existence of true religion, and so expressive is God's approval of that spiritual exercise in which the soul realizes fellowship with Himself.—*Ibid.*

IX. Reply to Anticipated Objections as regards Divine Disposition for Communion.

1 On scriptural grounds.

[10857] The objection anticipated is that a disposition for communion implies an imperfect and a dependent nature, and cannot, therefore, be reasonably ascribed to Jehovah, who is all-sufficient and independent. The objection cannot, of course, be urged by one who cordially assents to the testimony of Scripture, because the Scriptures, we have seen, directly represents the Deity as holding intercourse with mind at a period prior to the creation of man; and this intercourse He could not have held had He not possessed an inherent disposition for it. The intercourse described is perfectly voluntary; it was uninfluenced and unconstrained by any thing *ab extra.* "And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." Thus, the converse, or communion, sprang freely from the Divine volition, and, if from the Divine volition, it must have been from an inherent disposition; and such an inherent disposition was not a casual or adventitous impulse, but an essential property of the Divine nature. This must, we think, be irresistible to every mind which reveres the testimony of the sacred volume. Moreover, that a Being, possessing such an inherent disposition, should give a similar disposition to all intelligent beings, is an act in perfect accordance with His own blessed nature. That He should Himself commune with the minds to which He has imparted this disposition, is a part of His providential and moral economy, equally in harmony with His nature; and, further, that He should make fellowship with His own mind a duty incumbent on all intelligent beings, and an essential element of all religion, is an arrangement which might be anticipated, *à priori*, from the nature of the Creator. Thus facts harmonize with principles, and the testimony of the Scripture we have referred to is corroborated by reason.

Thus the objection in question not only derives no support from Scripture, but is contradicted by the sacred records.—*Ibid.*

2 On philosophic grounds.

(1) *If a disposition for communion be evidence of an imperfect nature, it follows that the absence of this disposition is a mark of excellence, and essential to the perfection of an intelligent being.*

[10858] Would the absence of this disposition be a mark of human excellence? Would a man, averse to fellowship with his fellow-man, and averse to fellowship with God, be a more amiable and excellent being on that account? With all his thoughts and affections concentrated only on himself, dwelling in solitude, hating society, and averse to his Creator, would he possess a superior nature and exhibit more excellence of character than he would with the contrary disposition urging him to delight in the society of mankind, and to exercise his thoughts, sympathies, and affections towards them and towards God? Would an angel devoid of this disposition evince a higher nature and manifest superior moral excellence? If so, the Creator must have greatly erred in forming their intellectual and moral constitution. In giving them a disposition for communion, He must, on this principle, have placed an effectual barrier to their superiority and excellence. We may further ask, Can we suppose the Deity Himself to be more excellent in His nature if this disposition were absent from Him? The absurdity of the notion is transparent. Had Jehovah been averse to this communion with intelligent beings, He would never have created them, or, if He had created them, He never would have given them a disposition to which His own nature is repugnant; and to suppose that He would have made their communion with Himself a religious duty, and have reciprocated that communion with them for ever, is to suppose that He acted not only without motive, but against motive. It is, indeed, to suppose a tissue of palpable absurdities and contradictions.—*Ibid.*

(2) *So far from the absence of this disposition being a perfection, its absence is undoubtedly an evidence of imperfection and inferiority.*

[10859] The absence of the disposition for communion can only be supposed possible from three causes—namely, the absence of intelligence, the absence of love, or the absence of both. If it arise from the want of intelligence, it argues a mental imperfection, for intelligence is essential to any degree of mental excellence. If it arise from a want of love, it implies a moral imperfection, for a benevolent affection is essential to moral excellence. The Deity is benevolent, and it is not only in proportion as the creatures imitate Him in this property that they can exhibit a superior moral nature. If it arise from the absence of both intelligence and love, it argues both mental and moral imperfections. If we look at the human race, we find men excelling in intellect and moral dignity just in proportion as this disposition for communion is exercised; and in the Christian, who daily holds communion with the Father of spirits, we see the highest developments of moral excellence and dignity adorning human nature. If we contemplate the properties of intelligent beings above us in nature and capacity, we find those exhibiting the highest excellence holding the most intimate fellowship with Deity; and those exhibiting the most consummate depravity, the most virulent malignity, living in a state of alienation from God—averse to the Deity, and as much averse to each other as their nature will admit. It is a remarkable fact that, just in proportion as any nature is excellent, this disposition is predominant; in proportion as any nature is inferior, this disposition is wanting; in proportion as this disposition is cherished, the nature becomes improved and exalted. This disposition is always the associate of excellence, and the more excellent the nature, the more intense and active is its operation. From these facts it follows that the disposition itself is an excellence; and, in ascribing it to the Divine nature, we are ascribing to Deity a glorious attribute and an essential perfection. Without it the Deity Himself would not be perfect.—*Ibid.*

X. Arguments impugning the Divine Wisdom and Goodness met and refuted.

1 As regards the facts on which such arguments are based.

(1) *The existence of noxious plants and animals.*

[10860] It is alleged that there are numerous plants which are hurtful to man; that thistles, and other useless weeds, encumber the ground; and henbane, hemlock, and many other poisonous plants, abound. We reply, As to weeds and plants, commonly supposed to be useless, the objection is founded, for the most part, in error; for we do not know of any plants entirely useless. Some, indeed, are not edible for man, but they form a nutritious aliment for inferior animals and insects; and if they were unfit for food to any creatures, it does not follow that they are useless. On the contrary, they perform important functions, both in purifying the atmosphere, and in increasing the amount of that vegetable mould which renders the earth so abundantly fertile. Weeds and non-edible plants are, for the most part, hardy in their nature, and capable of growing in scanty and rocky soils where esculent plants could not exist. Here they perform many important offices. They fill up a blank in nature, and cover an otherwise barren surface. As to poisonous plants, they are few compared with the immense number that are esculent and nutritious. The lower animals, guided by instinct, avoid them, and man soon learns by experience that they are not fit for food, so that very seldom does the least evil arise from their growth. Besides, the most noxious plants are ascertained to possess important medicinal virtues, which render their existence promotive to the health and welfare of mankind. Moreover, the growth of both weeds and poisonous plants is under the control of man. They may, indeed, flourish and luxuriate in the solitary desert, and their influence is beneficial; but if they flourish and abound to excess within the sphere of man's influence, it is generally a just rebuke to his indolence. He has the power almost to extirpate them utterly, and where that is impossible he may limit and subordinate their growth to his necessities and welfare.—*Ibid.*

[10861] It is alleged that there are various reptiles and predaceous animals which are hurtful to mankind. We reply—First. These creatures are extremely few compared with the immense numbers that are useful to man, either as beasts of burden, or as yielding him a supply of food and raiment. Now, what has rendered the useful abundant and the injurious few, but a benevolent purpose actuating the Creator? Secondly. Ferocious and dangerous creatures have an instinctive dread of man, and flee from his presence, making the forest, the wilderness, and untenanted parts of the earth their favourite haunts. Thirdly. They seldom attack man but when pressed with hunger or irritated by man. Fourthly. Man has power to destroy them when they invade the domain of civilized life, or when their numbers multiply to any dangerous extent. Fifthly. They perform important service by acting as the scavengers of nature, and by preventing the too rapid multiplication of other races on which they feed.

Here, then, the evil of their existence is but incidental, and connected with much positive and actual good, and the economy, as a whole, is evidently one of benevolence—one in which the welfare of man is consulted and provided for.

The myriads of microscopic animalcules were formerly regarded by many as either useless or detrimental; but modern science has discovered that these diminutive creatures, thirty thousand

of which may be contained in one drop of water, answer a most important and beneficent purpose in evolving a large portion of oxygen gas, and thus contributing to replenish the atmosphere with those vital properties so essential to our existence. In a very interesting paper by Messrs. August and Morren (Transactions of the Academy at Brussels, 1841), it is shown that water, abounding with animalcules, evolved a gas containing sixty-one per cent. of oxygen. The distinguished Liebig confirms this fact by an experiment of his own. —*Ibid.*

(2) *The calamities to which God's creatures, especially human beings, are exposed.*

[10862] It is alleged that sentient existence is exposed to various calamities, such as arise from earthquakes, pestilence, famine, and war. We reply that such calamities are few and far between, compared with our blessings and enjoyments. Millions upon millions—indeed, the vast majority of our world—seldom, if ever, experience these calamities; and the question may justly be proposed, What disposition is it that has caused so great a disproportion between our enjoyments and our calamities? Is it a malignant or a benign disposition that has ordained this remarkable difference? God had the power to reverse this proportion, had He delighted in the creature's misery; and the only reason why He did not, must be found in the pure and exalted benevolence of His nature. Besides, we know that many calamities may be averted, and all may be diminished by man himself.

As to war. — This can scarcely be classed among calamities. It is a misery of man's own creating, a misery growing out of man's ambition and cruelty, and can no more be chargeable on God than theft and murder can be laid to His charge. And although it is true that often the innocent suffer with the guilty in the ravages of war, yet their sufferings are chargeable on man's conduct, just as the death of a murdered victim lies on the soul of the assassin. Wars come from men's lusts. God commands all men to love one another, and love worketh no ill to our neighbour. If all men obeyed this command, the din of war would be hushed for ever.

As to destruction by earthquakes. — These catastrophes arise from those forces of Nature which, in earlier ages, performed an important part in preparing the world for man's habitation, and they are still working out a benevolent purpose. Earthquakes of a dangerous kind but seldom transpire, and when they do occur, they take place, for the most part, in those districts of country which are contiguous to volcanoes, where Nature herself warns man not to erect his habitation; and if man neglect Nature's admonitions, his presumption is the parent of his destruction.

Pestilence is generally the result of neglect o filthiness, or some violating of physical law. . . . From filthiness spring putrid fevers and divers pestilences, and when these scourges do arise, their victims among the temperate, the chaste, the prudent, and the cleanly are comparatively few. It is admitted that pestilence has often been sent as a special judgment upon a people; but a judgment for what? For violating God's laws, His physical as well as His moral laws; and, indeed, God's moral laws are for the most part the comprehensive philosophical exponents of His physical laws. Pestilence, rightly interpretated, is a rebuke upon man's licentiousness, filthiness, and neglect, as well as a denunciation of Heaven's displeasure against his unbelief and evil dispositions; and if all men lived in conformity with God's physical and moral laws, pestilence would cease.

Famine is a calamity which seldom occurs. For one scanty harvest which fails to supply our need, how many have we that are abundant! Again, we ask, What is it that makes the proportion so great on the side of plenty? Is it not the benevolent disposition of our Maker which causes Him to delight to do His needy creatures good? How easily He might withhold His bounty! But instead of withholding, He is constantly bestowing, so that scarcity and want are seldom felt. Besides, when famine occurs, it is never universal, but generally confined to a few localities. If there be scarcity in one nation, there is plenty in another, so that God's bounties have only to be distributed in order to supply the need of all. Viewed in this aspect, an occasional dearth seems like a call to the nations to have intercourse one with another, to reciprocate their help, and cultivate commercial and friendly relations; and surely, if the great Parent of all confers His benefits and blessings on His creatures, the children of the same great family ought to minister to each other's aid in the hour of need. In proportion as commerce extends, and nations reciprocate friendly offices, the evils of famine become diminished.

(3) *Bodily pain.*

10863] Evil no doubt exists, but it is never, that we can perceive, the object of the contrivance. Teeth are contrived to eat, not to ache; their aching now and then is incidental to the contrivance, perhaps inseparable from it, but it is not the object. This is a distinction which well deserves to be attended to. In describing implements of husbandry, one would hardly say of a sickle that it was made to cut the reaper's fingers; though, from the construction of this instrument and the manner of using it, this mischief often happens. But if he had occasion to describe instruments of torture or execution, "This," he would say, "is to extend the sinews; this to dislocate the joints; this to break the bones; this to scorch the soles of the feet." Here pain and misery are the very objects of the contrivance. Now, nothing of this sort is to be found in the works of Nature. We never discover a train of contrivances to bring about an evil purpose.—*Paley.*

[10864] It is impossible for us to determine

with precision how much our susceptibility of suffering has been augmented as a punitive result of sin. That such a consequence would result, to some extent, from the introduction of moral evil, is as reasonable to suppose as it is to suppose that Jehovah governs the world in righteousness, and that intelligent beings are accountable for their conduct. But whatever extent of physical suffering may be attributable to punitive justice, the prevalence of clemency and love in tempering those sufferings, and giving them a salutary tendency, is very conspicuous; for pains and sufferings are seldom experienced, except when some physical or moral law is either trangressed or neglected; and even then, the suffering is directed to a wise and beneficent end. A few examples will illustrate this truth.

Excess in eating, in drinking, or in any other indulgence, is a transgression of the law of temperance and self-government, and a variety of physical evil results therefrom. Gluttony produces plethora and gout; drunkenness generates dropsy, delirium tremens, and a host of miseries; luxury produces effeminacy, and often brings on destitution and want.

Injustice, *fraud*, and *oppression* are transgressions of the law of love to our neighbour; and all the cruelties, wars, and murders which afflict mankind spring from the indulgence of these depraved principles.

Lasciviousness is a violation of the law of continence and chastity. Debility, consumption, loathsome diseases, premature death, and hereditary infirmities and pollutions stream forth from this degrading vice.

Indolence.—The law of activity and industry is legibly inscribed upon man's nature, and enforced by his own interests, and by the instinctive habits of the animal creation. Idleness is a neglect of this law, and its consequences are squalid wretchedness and want, which, in their turn, produce other vices, and these vices, again, give birth to other miseries. —*Wm. Cooke, D.D.*

[10865] The connection of pains with the violation of moral and physical law is as distinguished by clemency as by justice, for they are intended to subserve a benevolent end. . . . Thus the nausea, the headache, and sickness which follow the first drunken surfeit are gentle warnings to avoid that course in the future; and the debility, the delirium tremens, and the dropsy, which attend a more advanced stage of intemperance, are still louder tones of admonition to escape from the disgusting vice. Thus the squalid wretchedness, disease, and woe resulting from idleness, filthiness, and prodigality, are rebukes and admonitions to their miserable victims. The sufferings of the obscene libertine utter a loud and intelligible warning, calling upon him to abandon his depraved course. Indeed, all the physical evils springing from sin are so many merciful admonitions to repentance and reformation. They are so many appeals to man's self-love, even when he is lost to every higher principle, declaiming against his vicious habits, and summoning him to the path of virtue and obedience, lest iniquity be his utter ruin. And generally, this appeal of Nature, though gentle at first, becomes louder and louder as the danger becomes more imminent—the tones of admonition, uttered by suffering and woe consequent on vice, assume a more startling and terrific cry as the rebel steps nearer the precipice of irrecoverable ruin. We ask, What principle could dictate this economy? The sinner's recovery to virtue and happiness is obviously the object, and that surely is the object of clemency and love. Punitive justice may, indeed, be manifested, but evidently in harmonious connection with tender compassion — with unbounded goodness and love.—*Ibid.*

(4) *Physical evils not arising from vicious habits.*

[10866] It is alleged that there are sufferings not immediately arising from sin or moral evil, so far as their causes can be traced. We very much question, however, whether such pains and sufferings ought to be placed in the category of evils. Thus, if by accident a man or any other animal receive a bruise, a burn, or a cut, pain is instantly felt. But though in such cases pain is indeed experienced, and is unavoidable with our present constitution, the pain we regard as no evil, but a benefit, and an indication of a benevolent purpose. It is obvious the suffering, in such cases, is not punitive in its object, nor permitted for any object but a beneficial one—namely, the preservation of the creature. If no pain were felt from a bruise, we should have no warning to escape from danger; if no smart were felt from fire, we might be fatally burned before we were conscious of having received injury; if no pain were experienced from a wound, a limb might be amputated or a vital part be pierced before we were aware of any harm being done. The connection, therefore, of pain with any injury done to the body is a benevolent provision made for our preservation. The goodness of God is further manifested in having given the greatest sensibility to the outer surface of the body by his having distributed an immense number of nerves, like network, immediately under the skin, which, as so many watchful sentinels, in a moment give the alarm when danger is near, and our instinctive aversion to pain prompts us at the same moment to escape.—*Ibid.*

(5) *The inequalities of man's condition.*

[10867] It is not obligatory upon benevolence to render all men equal—to place all men on the same perfect level. If a certain rich man should provide for the necessities of a hundred poor families, we should justly deem him benevolent; and if the same rich man should also elevate another family above poverty to a degree of affluence, we should not regard him the less benevolent on that account. The second act of goodness to one family does not negative the

first act of charity to a hundred. Thus it is with God's gifts, and the disposition from which they flow. He gives nothing but what is absolutely His own, and the fact that He may bestow more on some does not neutralize the goodness that every day provides for millions.

It is manifestly the design of a gracious God that all men should have food to eat and raiment to wear, and He amply provides for these; and if they be not realized by some, the cause is to be ascribed, not to God, but to man—either to the conduct of the sufferer himself, or to injustice or oppression, or to a want of charity in others. If there be any cases of want not referable to these causes, they are few indeed, and if the true causes were known, they would be found to involve no impeachment of the Divine goodness. The unceasing bounty of God's providence for man meets every charge against His kindness and love.

Perfect equality among men is a Utopian idea, which can never be realized. If all men were now placed in equal circumstances, their diversity of talent, habit, and character would soon produce an inequality as wide as that which exists in society. Men are to a great extent the architects of their own condition. Moreover, the mutual dependence of man upon man, of talent upon capital, and of labour upon both, and of both upon labour, renders it necessary to the well-being of every part of the social structure that there should be variety in the condition of mankind; just as the various members of the human body are mutually dependent one upon another, and their various positions and offices subserve the good of the whole, so that the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of thee," nor the hand to the eye, "I have no need of thee." It is even so in the social fabric—the rich subserve the welfare of the poor, and the poor promote the interests of the rich, and all in their appropriate sphere minister to the good of the body politic. Talent, capital, and labour are mutually dependent and subservient; one cannot do without the other, and it is the design of Providence that every man should be honourable, useful, and happy in his own sphere.

Riches are among the least gifts that Providence has to bestow, and all the higher endowments and blessings of human nature are imparted to the poor as well as the rich, and often with more abundant bounty.—*Ibid.*

(6) *Death of the human race.*

[10868] The fact that all visible creatures are doomed to die has often been adduced as an argument against the benevolent character of God. It is confessedly a fact invested with a sombre aspect, and well fitted to engender grave reflections. Indeed, viewed personally, it is repugnant to our selfish instincts and desires; but that it is repugnant to the Divine benevolence, we are not prepared to admit. Seeing that death is the effect of sin, it impugns neither the justice nor the benevolence of God. In the economy of human governments it is not deemed unjust to inflict the penalty of death for the violation of human laws. Nor does the infliction of death argue a want of benevolence in the sovereign who administers our laws. It is rather the dictate of benevolence toward the living and the obedient that the murderer is removed by the extreme penalty of the law. Moreover, as God gave life, he had a right to take it away if he pleased, even if man had never sinned. The mere cessation of life does not neutralize the goodness displayed in giving life for a time, and in providing for its enjoyments while it is permitted to continue. But when, in taking away that life from one, it is under an economy which affords scope for imparting life to thousands and millions of others through successive generations, there is plainly a manifestation of unbounded goodness, even in connection with the infliction of a dreadful penalty. To each sinner death is a punishment, because it removes him from earth under circumstances of pain and degradation; but, after all, Divine goodness is not defeated in its purpose, for death itself creates room and scope for multiplying existence to countless millions. Thus death merely shortens the period of God's goodness in relation to the physical existence of each generation, but at the same time it affords scope for extending the blessing of life to others, who, in their turn, share the same tokens of Divine clemency and regard. Without death man must have been either removed from this sphere while alive, or his species must have ceased to be multiplied. Sin has deprived him of the privilege of being removed by translation. He is taken away by death; this is punitive; but seeing this punitive removal affords room for multiplying existence to countless myriads, and seeing Divine goodness immediately replenishes the vacancy by new generations of the same race, on whom God continues successively to heap the proofs of his regard, we see in this economy multiplying evidences that God is good.—*Ibid.*

(7) *The existence of moral evil.*

[10869] Moral evil is sin, and sin is a voluntary transgression. Therefore moral evil is not the act of God. . . . . To have prevented the existence of sin by an absolute determination would have prevented the freedom of all intelligent beings. As a consequence this would have prevented the existence of moral excellence, and converted intelligent beings into mere machines. . . . In such a state of things God could have had no moral empire, no mental obedience, no intellectual servants and subjects, nor could the creature have realized any moral development or excellency: the mind would have been as passive as matter, and God the only agent and operator in the universe of being. The exclusion of free agency would thus exclude from Jehovah's empire all moral government, and the development of all those moral excellences which reflect so much real dignity, worth, and happiness on the creature. If, therefore, God must have a moral empire at all, if moral

obedience must be rendered to him, and moral excellence with its attendant glories and enjoyments must be developed, intelligent beings must be free; and if free, they must be liable to sin. It is true they need not sin; their freedom excludes all necessity of departing from the right way; but the possibility of their doing so is certainly involved in a capacity for obedience and moral excellence. Such a constitution, therefore, as renders the intelligent being free, with all its attendant possibilities, is undoubtedly wise and good, and is every way worthy of God.—*Ibid.*

(8) *Human susceptibility to mental anguish.*

[10870] Our susceptibility of remorse and mental anguish does not impugn the benevolence of the Divine Being. The very existence of remorse and mental anguish implies the existence of sin, and flows from it as its punishment. Unless, therefore, this impugns the Divine justice, it is in perfect harmony with benevolence. That it is not unjust for the sinner to suffer these emotions, will be admitted; and if so, the capacity for such emotions involves no injustice. If intelligent beings were without such a capacity, they would have no moral sense, no conscience, and be incompetent for moral obedience.

So far from our moral sense, or, in other words, our susceptibility of remorse, impugning the Divine goodness, we are prepared to say that such a constitution affords an additional proof of that goodness. In considering this subject, however, it must be carefully observed that a constitutional susceptibility is widely different from a constitutional propensity. A propensity is a disposition actively operating and stimulating the creature to a certain course. Such are all instinctive propensities and passions; but a susceptibility implies a passive state—a mere liability to be subject to certain influences. Now, it is remarkable that such is the constitution of our nature, that, while we are stimulated to enjoyments, we are merely susceptible of pains, whether of body or mind. We have instincts and propensities actively prompting to what yields gratification and delight, but are merely liable to sufferings; we are never instinctively prompted to them. Thus we are merely susceptible of remorse and mental anguish. These emotions do not intrinsically or instinctively arise in our minds, like the salient and spontaneous springs of joyous emotions. They are never experienced but when excited by some course of moral action. In a well-ordered mind they are never excited by good actions, nor are they excited by actions that are indifferent in their character. They are never excited by seeking happiness in any lawful object, or within a lawful extent. In fact, they are never excited except by the exercise of bad affections and the practice of bad actions. Thus, remorse and mental anguish are only the associates of vicious conduct—the attendants and the scourge of moral evil. Such a constitution, therefore, instead of impugning the Divine goodness, affords an additional demonstration of it. For why are remorse and mental anguish merely susceptibilities and not active instincts? Because God is good, and is averse to our suffering unnecessarily. Why are these painful emotions not excited by actions good in their nature or indifferent in their quality? Because God is good, and delights in our virtue and happiness.—*Ibid.*

(9) *Hereditary depravity and future punishment.*

[10871] It is true that mankind are involuntarily the subjects of inherent depravity; but it is equally true that mankind are involuntarily placed in a state of grace and salvation (Rom. v. 15). The remedy is co-extensive with the disease. As to the final destiny of those who die in infancy, we are assured of their salvation through Him who in the days of his earthly sojourn said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." And as to the final condition of those who have never heard the gospel, we must leave it to the righteous Governor of all, assured that their final state will harmonize with both the justice and the mercy of God. The Judge of all the earth will do right, and his decision, when made known, will command the assent of all holy intelligences. It is, indeed, a solemn truth that many human beings will perish eternally; but it will be the result of their wilful rebellion, their obstinate resistance of Divine mercy and goodness. The future punishment of the wicked may be regarded as a necessary result of a sinful existence. Sin carries with it its own punishment to a certain extent, while men exist on earth; and if their existence be perpetuated in the world to come, that existence must be miserable. For the society and employments of heaven there is neither relish nor sympathy in their moral nature; and severed from God and heaven they must be, even if they had their choice. Heaven itself would be a hell to the wicked. The elements of misery are essentially and inseparably connected with sin. Divine mercy has provided a remedy, and if men reject that remedy, their doom is the result of their own conduct, and impugns not either the benevolence or the justice of God.—*Ibid.*

XI. Import and Significance of the Knowledge of God.

[10872] It is so vast that it will take nothing short of eternity to comprehend it—to *know* God. Let us occupy ourselves not so much with the *knowledge* as with the *God*. It is not the process of knowing, but the glorious One whom we seek to know, and whom it is His gracious purpose that we should know. In one sense it is impossible to know God here fully. In that sense we may say that we are agnostics, for we cannot know Him fully. But, blessed be His

name, He is able to reveal to us, as we are able to bear it, just those glorious features of His person and character that we, each one of us, stand in need of. But where must we be to know Him? I remember many years ago a learned Jewish rabbi, still in London, with whom I then had a good deal to do, telling me one morning, as he came to the class, that he had been present the night before at a very solemn scene: it was the deathbed of a very aged Israelite, a man of wealth, and a man with a large family of sons, all of them old men almost themselves, standing around his bed. The rabbi said he could picture to himself the departing Jacob with his sons around him. He told these sons of a strange dream he had had the night before, which had filled him with anxiety and made him very sad. He dreamt that he was about to enter upon the unknown world, and that one of the heavenly ones came to him, holding out a garment, with which he must invest himself ere he could enter; but he tried in vain to put it on. He could not undo the fastenings with which it was fastened; and he saw that on each successive fastening there was an inscription. On the first was written, "Know God;" on the next was written, "Who can know God?" on the third was written, "None but God can know God." But he could not unfasten it. No, poor Hebrew, he had not the key of David. He did not know God in the face of Jesus Christ. His sons were unable to help him; and thus he passed away. The rabbi said truly, for he was unable himself to unlock the fastening, "It was a sad scene." "None but God can know God." You must be in God before you can know Him. Therefore, He makes us partakers of the Divine nature; gives us His holy Spirit that we may know Him.—*S. A. Blackwood.*

XII. Nature and Conditions of its Attainment.

[10873] It is, of course, understood and admitted that there can be no absolute knowledge of God. So far our agnostic friends are right; but though this is true it is not new. In one of the oldest books of the Bible we have it quite fairly expressed in the passage, "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" But is not the same thing true on a small scale in regard to our fellow-men? This is true, even though your friend may be below you in spiritual attainments, and it is still more so if he be above you. Our knowledge of one another is in every case limited by two things—capability of expression on the one hand, power of comprehension on the other. There may be much in the soul of my friend that is never expressed—in look or in attitude, or in word or in deed. There may be much in him that cannot be expressed; there may be much that he would not express, though he could, or could not though he would. On the other hand, there may be very much of what is expressed that I cannot understand or catch.

To illustrate this further, for it seems to me of great importance in reference to the subject of the knowledge of God, let us consider what means we have of gaining some knowledge of such a one as Michael Angelo. There are fragments of revelation of the spirit of Michael Angelo scattered far and wide in our art galleries and elsewhere in casts and copies, so that almost everybody has an opportunity of knowing something about him. Then there are poems of his which give a further revelation of the man to those who have an opportunity of reading them. These are all expressions of his spirit, utterances of the man, and we might, without abuse of language, put them all together, and call them the word of Michael Angelo. But it is quite evident that the extent of my knowledge of him will depend not only on my opportunities of seeing these works of his, and studying them, but also, and even more, upon the degree with which my spirit is kindred with his; the degree in which I can understand that which is expressed in his works.

Then suppose that from the study of his works we have learned something of the reality which lurks behind the great name of Michael Angelo, and we wish to know still more about him, what do we do? We take up his life and read it. How much more knowledge have we of the great artist now? This, again, will depend first upon what his biographer has been able to catch and set down of that which he has uttered and expressed; and, secondly, what I am able to take in of that which is set down. Or, again, if I look at his portrait, the additional knowledge that I have from looking on his portrait will depend in the first place upon what the painter has been able to set down on the canvas, and secondly, what I am able to see of that which is set down. Still further, the case would not be altered in principle even if we could have lived in his time, and lived with him, so as to see him every day, and be in his company almost constantly. We should in that case have a far better opportunity of knowing him, but even then our knowledge of him would be subject to the same twofold limitation; first it would depend upon how much of the spirit within him ever uttered itself in his face, or gesture, or word, or deed, and second upon our ability to comprehend and catch that which was thus uttered.

The point of view we have now reached is a favourable one for seeing of what immeasurable importance this second condition is; for is it not manifest that it would be quite possible for the artist's *valet de chambre*, for his own personal attendant, to know less of him, less of the true Michael Angelo, than a man of kindred soul, who had never seen him, and had not even read his life, and had paid just one visit to the Sistine Chapel?—*Dr. Munro Gibson.*

[10874] Our knowledge of our fellow-men, even under the most favourable circumstances, must be partial and inadequate. Why, then, should we expect to have full and adequate

knowledge of God? But then, even the imperfect knowledge we can have of each other is sufficient for the purposes of life; why, then, may not our knowledge of God, however imperfect and inadequate in an absolute sense, not only be really knowledge so far as it goes, but be amply sufficient for all purposes of life?—*Ibid.*

[10875] Is there no way of passing from the outer circle of God's works, which are but the hem of His garment, to his very seat, to his very life and soul and heart? Yes, there is! "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." There is the central point of the revelation of God, . . . the rest are the scattered rays of the Divine glory. . . . There must be a soul to comprehend this. . . . It is quite possible for a man not only to look at Michael Angelo's works, but even to live in his house and see him every day, and yet know nothing except the mere shell of him; have no such knowledge of him as to be any the better for having looked at him. What is wanted in such a case is the spirit of the artist, not in all its vastness necessarily—for who could hope for such an advantage?—but a share of it, as much of it as the smaller capacity will admit of—enough, at all events, to ensure sympathy, appreciation, delight in the artist and all his works.—*Ibid.*

[10876] Those who would know God must seek Him in Christ. "I am the Way." "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Need we wonder, then, that those who turn away from Christ never can find God? Need we wonder that so many even of our most learned and patient searchers after truth never attain to the knowledge of God? It is not that they are dishonest. It is that they will not look in the right direction. Why will they not learn that it is not by searching that even the most learned can find out God? It is not by the use of those faculties which are the glory of the learned and the great. It is not by any process of induction or triumph of logic. No; but it is simply by the lifting up of our souls to our living Father—the eye, the ear, the heart of faith, all open to hear His voice and welcome His love. Oh that our learned people would only give up dealing with propositions and abstract principles, and seek the Lord! If any one is minded to wrestle with questions, he can find a million to do it with. But, alas! such wrestling will lead to nothing, and there will be no Peniel to keep it in memory. If, instead of wrestling with questions and problems, they would, like poor, weak Jacob, wrestle with God, then the day would dawn upon them, their darkness would be dispelled, light would stream upon them, and then would they understand how it is that men in all ages who have walked with God, have learned to know in whom they have have believed.—*Ibid.*

[10877] The essential point is: we must seek personal acquaintance with God, and seek His face. There should be an outgoing of our souls to our Father in heaven as He is manifested unto us. Even in the Old Testament time it was always in this way that God became known. Hence the prominence given to the conception, to the Name of God. What was the Name of God? It included all of God that had been exposed to view. It was all His face that they had seen or could then see. We can see more of it now. We have "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," who is the image of the invisible God, the express image of His person. Our attitude must be the same. There must be the lifting up of the heart, the outgoing of the soul, the spiritual act of which this is the simplest expression, "When thou saidst, Seek ye My face, my heart said, Lord, Thy face will I seek."

The knowledge of God begins by looking unto Jesus. It grows by abiding in His presence and keeping up communion with Him. As soon as we come to Him we receive something of His Spirit, and are able to understand a little. As we stay with Him and walk with Him we receive more and more of His Spirit, and are able to understand more and more; for the two processes go on hand in hand. The more we see of the Divine in Him, the more we receive of the Divine in ourselves; and, conversely, the more we receive of the Divine in ourselves, the more we see of the Divine in Him. By equal steps, step by step, no one can tell which is the first. —*Ibid.*

[10878] There was a remarkable statement made by one of those who, in the days preceding our Lord, were more or less inspired, but not like the scriptural writers—I allude to the writers of the Apocrypha. In the Wisdom of Solomon (xv. 3) we are told that "to know Thee is perfect righteousness; yea, to know Thy power is the root of immortality." What a glorious sentence from one who cannot claim the direct inspiration of God! I believe that, subject to God's teaching, such a word as that may be most helpful to many of us when we aspire to understand this glorious knowledge.

Now, so vastly important is the matter that we find in one epistle alone (1 Cor.) that there is brought before us twenty-five times the knowledge of observation; twenty-seven times the knowledge of reflection, and four times the knowledge of deep experimental enjoyment, which are of course represented by different words in the Greek. So that fifty-six times we have this wonderful subject of knowledge brought before us by one apostle in one Epistle. To take another example, in the first Epistle of John, with its five little chapters, you have no fewer than twenty-five times the knowledge of observation, fifteen times the knowledge of reflection—forty times in that one short Epistle. Who can attempt, then, in a few minutes, to do justice to this subject?

If we ask, But what is meant by the knowledge

of God? we may reply that it is a knowledge which implies unity of nature, community of goods, similarity of taste, and constant yearning after the same ends. Have we fully entered into this?—that to have anything whatsoever of this knowledge of God, there must be an actual unity of nature, because "if a man be not born of the Spirit" (as our Lord says) "he cannot see the kingdom of God." How many there are who deceive themselves with the idea that this knowledge is attained by constant study, whereas we are to receive this knowledge by God's gift. "The gift of God is eternal life." The Spirit it is that quickeneth into life. Let the Holy Spirit enter into the soul, and the man becomes in a position to commence the study of this God, the knowledge of whom is, through all eternity, to be the one aspiration of his soul. But never, till we have been made partakers of the Divine nature, can we even hope to commence this glorious study, or to have the very rudimentary elements of this knowledge of God. If there is one, therefore, in this assembly, conscious in his own soul that he has not been made a partaker of the very life of God, let that man know that he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. "For," says St. Paul, "what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God," &c. (1 Cor. ii. 11–14).

We must be made partakers of the Divine nature, being begotten of God (1 John v. 18), and we must have a deep sense of reality of this glorious union with God in Christ. This is not presumption. It is the condescension of God that brings us into our proper place when we realize that God has given to us an enjoyment of the very life of God, a suitable link to eternity itself, that cannot break, but that will only bind us closer and closer to Him who is the infinitely and absolutely Unknowable. Nor are we only to realize the unity of nature, but there must also be the knowledge of the community of goods (1 Cor. iii. 21–23). We have seen that it is impossible for any man to know who is not placed in sympathy with the one whom he seeks to know. This truth has been traced by theologians in language hardly becoming to a gathering like this, but one yearns to give some expression to that which one believes to be the great manifestation of this truth of God, and all can apprehend the thought that for a man to know the Divine he must have the Divine: for a man to know another he must be so united to that other as to have a sense of perfect community of interest, &c., in all that belongs to that other whom he would know.

There must be sympathy, and there must be realization of oneness in taste, habit, desire, property (Rev. xxi. 7), and prospect. If a man has not entered into the realization of the gifts of God (1 Cor. ii. 12), it is vain for him to speak of himself as knowing God. But let there be this realization, this giving out of one's trust to God's work of love, and the beginning of this enjoyment of all things in Christ; then we are placed in a position wherein we may commence the further study of our God.—*Rev. W. H. Webb Peploe.*

2

SPIRITUALITY.

I. Nature and Significance of the Divine Spirituality.

[10879] God is without all composition, without any parts, not having soul and body, as we have, not being compounded of substance and accident, as we are; but He is palpable, not to be discerned by any sense. Therefore Christ bids His disciples to feel Him: "Behold My hands and My feet (saith He) that it is I Myself; handle and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as I have." A spirit is that which is drawn from the sight of any corporeal sense whatsoever, and in this sense God is called a spirit. —*John Preston*, 1631.

[10880] The spirit insinuates itself, and enters into any bodily substance, without all penetration of dimension; that is, it is not held out of any place by reason of a body that is in it; it may be in it though the place be otherwise full; as you see the soul is in the body, you shall find nowhere an empty place, the body is everywhere whole; yet the Spirit insinuates itself in every part, and no body can keep it out. And so is God; He is invisible, not seen by any eye, He moves Himself and all things in the world as He lists; and He doth what He doth with exceeding great strength; and then He fills every place, both heaven and earth; what bodies soever be there, yet He may be there notwithstanding. And thus you see in what sense this is to be understood, God is a spirit. —*Ibid.*

II. Reasons for the Deductions of this Doctrine.

1 Because God is without composition.

[10881] He is so simple that there are no parts in Him: if He have no parts, then He must needs be simple, and without composition; and, indeed, of what should He be compounded? He was before all things, therefore necessarily He must be without all composition; all created spirits are without bodies, but all created spirits have a kind of composition; but God hath none: all created spirits, both angels and souls of men, have a kind of composition, they are compounded of act and power; but God hath neither matter nor form, nor is compounded of act and power, therefore He is without composition, and it may well be said that He is a spirit invisible and incorporeal.—*R. Stock*, 1641.

2 Because God cannot be comprehended nor contained in any space.

[10882] Corporeal things are comprehended, as the bodies that are in this place may be circumscribed; the reason is, because they have length, breadth, and depth; but no such thing is in God. I say all spirits are without these, and free from circumscription, then much more this spirit. This is that Solomon speaks of 1 Kings viii. 2: "Doth God indeed dwell among men, behold the heavens of heavens are not able to contain thee." So Jer. xxiii. 24: "I fill heaven and earth." Saint Cyprian saith, God is such an essence as is spiritual, and is in every place, and excluded out of no place, nor included in any place, but fills every place, therefore he must needs be a spirit invisible and incorporeal.—*Ibid.*

3 Because God is not subject to senses.

[10883] "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me have:" the reason is, because spirits have not sensible qualities, which are the object of men's senses, much less hath God any such qualities; in God there is no mutability, nor change, therefore He is not subject to sense; for whatsoever is subject to sense is mutable; that which is the sharpest sense, and best able to comprehend, is the eyes, but this cannot comprehend God; God is infinite, and therefore cannot possibly fall under finite sense of man; that which is subject to sense is subject to man's understanding; but God exceeds man's understanding. He is great; we know Him not, saith Elihu; we know Him no further than He doth reveal Himself, and when we know the most, how little of Him do we perceive. Therefore it follows from hence that God is a spirit.—*Ibid.*

III. Importance of the Principle involved in Doctrine.

[10884] To deny the distinction between matter and spirit is to deny the spirituality of God, and to contradict the distinction which, as to man, is constantly kept up in every part of the Bible—the distinction between flesh and spirit. To assert that consciousness, thought, volition, &c., are the results of organization, is to deny also what the Scripture so expressly affirms, that the souls of men exist in a disembodied state; and that, in this disembodied state, not only do they exist, but that they think, and feel, and act, without any diminution of their energy or capacity. The immateriality of the Divine Being may, therefore, be considered as a point of great importance, not only as it affects our views of His nature and attributes, but because, when once it is established that there exists a pure spirit, living, intelligent, and invested with moral properties, the question of the immateriality of the human soul may be considered as almost settled. Those who deny that must admit that the Deity is material; or, if they start at this, they must be convicted of the unphilosophical and absurd attempt to invest a substance, allowed to be of an entirely different nature (the body of man) with those attributes of intelligence and volition which, in the case of the Divine Being, they have allowed to be the properties of pure unembodied spirit. The propositions are totally inconsistent; for they who believe God is wholly an immaterial being, and that man is wholly a material one, admit that spirit is intelligent, and that matter is intelligent. They cannot, then, be of different essences; and if the premises be followed out to their legitimate conclusion, either that which thinks in man must be allowed to be spiritual, or a material Deity must follow. The whole truth of revelation, both as to God and His creature man, must be acknowledged, or the atheism of Spinoza and Hobbes must be admitted.—*Rev. Richard Watson.*

IV. Conclusions drawn from Doctrine.

[10885] If God be a spirit, it follows of necessity that He is a person — a self-conscious, intelligent, voluntary agent. As all this is involved in our consciousness of ourselves as spirit, it must all be true of God, or God is of a lower order of being than man.

It follows also that God is a simple Being, not only as not composed of different elements, but also as not admitting of the distinction between substance and accidents. Nothing can either be added to or taken from God. In this view the simplicity as well as the other attributes of God are of a higher order than the corresponding attributes of our spiritual nature. The soul of man is a simple substance; but it is subject to change. It can gain and lose knowledge, holiness, and power. These are in this view accidents in our substance. But in God they are attributes, essential and immutable. Finally, it follows from God's being a spirit that He is a moral as well as an intelligent Being. It is involved in the very nature of rational voluntary being that it should be conformed to the rule of right, which in the case of God is His own infinite reason. These are primary truths, which are not to be sacrificed to any speculative objections. It is vain to tell us that an infinite spirit cannot be a person, because personality implies self-consciousness, and self-consciousness implies the distinction between the self and the not-self, and this is a limitation. It is equally vain to say that God cannot have moral excellence, because moral goodness implies conformity to law, and conformity to law again is inconsistent with the idea of an absolute Being. These are empty speculations; and even if incapable of a satisfactory solution, would afford no rational ground for rejecting the intuitive truths of reason and conscience. There are mysteries enough in our nature, and yet no sane man denies his own personal existence and moral accountability. And he is worse than insane who is beguiled by such sophistries into renouncing his faith in

God as a personal spirit and a loving Father.—*Dr. C. Hodge.*

V. SCRIPTURAL CONFIRMATION OF DOCTRINE.

[10886] It need hardly be remarked that the Scriptures everywhere represent God as possessing all the above-mentioned attributes of a spirit. On this foundation all religion rests; all intercourse with God, all worship, all prayer, all confidence in God as preserver, benefactor, and redeemer. The God of the Bible is a person. He spoke to Adam. He revealed Himself to Noah. He entered into covenant with Abraham. He conversed with Moses, as a friend with a friend. He everywhere uses the personal pronouns. He says, "I am," that "is My name. I am the Lord your God. I am merciful and gracious. Call upon Me, and I will answer you." Our Lord has put into our lips words which reveal that God is a spirit, and all that being a spirit implies, when He teaches us to say, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done." Everywhere the God of the Bible is contrasted with the gods of the heathen, as a God who sees, hears, and loves. These are not regulative, they are real truths. God does not mock us when He thus presents Himself to us as a personal Being with whom we can have intercourse, and who is everywhere present to help and save. "To human reason," says Mansel, "the personal and the infinite stand out in apparently irreconcilable antagonism; and the recognition of the one in a religious system almost inevitably involves the sacrifice of the other." This cannot be so. According to the Bible, and according to the dictates of our own nature, of reason as well as of conscience, God is a spirit, and being a spirit is of necessity a person; a Being who can say I, and to whom we can say Thou.—*Ibid.*

3

INVISIBILITY.

I. INVISIBILITY ESSENTIAL TO THE PERFECTION OF GOD AS A SPIRITUAL AND PERFECT ESSENCE.

[10887] That God should be invisible is a necessity of His perfection. An infinite Being never can be revealed in all His glory, and in the fulness of His being, to any limited faculty and sense, or in any local manifestation whatever. Heaven is no more capable of "containing" God than the earth, although more of His glory is displayed there. And angels and sainted souls in heaven, in their highest raptures, in their clearest visions, "see no similitude."—*A. Raleigh, D.D.*

[10888] Even if it be allowed that he is always to retain the human form—a question on which divines are not unanimous, and on which Scripture says expressly nothing, or very little—allow that our blessed Lord will always, through eternity, retain His glorified humanity in heaven, and be seen in that, and be loved and worshipped in that, the question still is, What will be seen? Just, only in more full measure and without any obscuration, what was seen on earth, the Divine shining through the human. That is, a part of the Divine fulness and perfection shining upon the beholders through the medium of a perfect humanity; the spiritual essence, the infinite power and presence of God will still be deep within, quite beyond, high above, far away. Ah, let us thank God that He is what He is—that no man can see Him! He is perfect so—He would not be perfect else! He is a portion so—He would not be a portion else! What I can see can never be a portion to my immortal soul; a spiritual substance requires a spiritual portion; the child-spirits need the Father of spirits.—*Ibid.*

II. SCRIPTURAL DECLARATIONS OF DIVINE INVISIBILITY.

[10889] God is invisible. We have not many Scriptures which teach this expressly and formally, but those which teach it are so clear and strong, and there are so many others which imply and involve it, that there cannot be the doubt of a moment what the doctrine of Scripture is. Job says, "Behold I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold Him: He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him." I cannot, in any way, penetrate the dark mantle of His invisibility. When God gave the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel, they "heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude" (Deut. iv. 12, 15). In 1 Timothy vi. 15. 16, we have a glorious description of God (the very reading of which seems to lift us to a mountain-top) as "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor *can* see." And John says, "No man hath seen God at any time."—*Ibid.*

III. HUMAN PERCEPTION OF THE INVISIBLE GOD.

1 The means of this perception.

(1) *Clear-sighted faith.*

[10890] God is in our life to be seen. He who can be seen nowhere with the bodily sight—whom we might follow and seek in vain through all the realms of space, whom we should never find on brightest mountain-tops, if they were transfigured with the light of Tabor,—nor in solemn grove, nor in deepest forest shade, nor among the flowers of Eden, if Eden were restored; no! nor could we see Him in

heaven itself if we were there ;—He can be seen and felt by the soul, by the spiritual perception, by that wonderful faculty called "faith," which is just our soul seeing God. By that faculty we can see Him in all our earthly ways, at our right hand, at our left, behind, before, around, above, about our bed, about our path, in the field of labour, in the place of rest, in the flow of prosperity, in the ebb of adversity, in the sunshine of joy, in the darkness of sorrow, in the hardness of duty, in the sweetness of recompense, in the battle of life, in the conquering moment of death—God everywhere ! God always ! God for evermore !—*Ibid.*

2 The mighty power and influence of this perception.

[10891] Victory never passes from the soldier who endures and fights as seeing Him who is invisible ; and, on the other hand, never sits on the plume of any one who does not see Him. Nothing, nothing but the sight of Him can preserve souls from falling in the shock of such a fray ! It would have been a vain boast of David to say, "I shall not be moved," if he had not said before, "He is at my right hand." In vain had Joseph cried, "How shall I do this great wickedness ?" unless he had added, "and sin against God." In vain, seven times in vain, had Paul said, "Nevertheless I live," unless he had also said, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."—*Ibid.*

3 The satisfying joy of this perception.

[10892] It is the grave delusion of this world that men think, and are led on by the devil and their own evil hearts to think more and more, that they can find sufficing portion in material things ; that they can gather and hold, hammer and make, brighten and beautify, until they shall be satisfied, until they shall say to the outward world and visible universe, "Hold ! It is enough ! Now we are at rest !" It is the grand discovery of the Scriptures, and the good message of salvation, that God only is enough for man. Spirit for spirit—Creator for creature —the Invisible for the invisible. We have never seen our own souls, we shall never see their portion. We feel, although we do not see, ourselves, and in our best moments rejoice with great joy in our own existence ! We feel in our spiritual sense—although we do not see—our God, and in our best moments we rejoice with exceeding great joy, with joy unspeakable and full of glory, that He is our all-sufficient, unchanging, everlasting portion.—*Ibid.*

4

INFINITY.

I. Significance of this Attribute.

1 The idea of infinity not merely negative.

[10893] Being, in this connection, is that which is, or exists. The being of God is His essence or substance, of which His perfections are the essential attributes or modes of manifestation. When it is said that God is infinite as to His being, what is meant is that no limitation can be assigned to His essence. It is often said that our idea of the infinite is merely negative. There is a sense in which this may be true, but there is a sense in which it is not true. It is true that the form of the proposition is negative when we say that no limit can be assigned to space, or possible duration, or to the being of God. But it implies the affirmation that the object of which infinity is predicted is illimitable. It is as much a positive idea which we express when we say a thing is infinite as when we say that it is finite. We cannot, indeed, form a conception or mental image of an infinite object, but the word nevertheless expresses a positive judgment of the mind. Sir William Hamilton and others, when they say that the infinite is a mere negation, mean that it implies a negation of all thought. That is, we mean nothing when we say that a thing is infinite. As we know nothing of the inhabitants of the other planets of our system, if such there be, or of the mode in which angels and disembodied spirits take cognizance of material objects, our ideas on such subjects are purely negative, or blank ignorance. "The infinite," Mansel says, "is not a positive object of human thought." Every man, however, knows that the propositions "Space is infinite," and "Space is finite," express different and equally definite thoughts. When, therefore, we say that God is infinite, we mean something ; we express a great and positive truth.—*Dr. C. Hodge.*

[10894] When we speak, however humbly and reverently, of things great and small in God's regard ; of things too trifling, and of other things not too trifling, for His notice, we are forgetting that it is the attribute of the Infinite and Self-Existent One to measure not with man's measure the relative or the positive ; that to God nothing can be great but Himself. —*C. J. Vaughan.*

2 The infinite not the all.

[10895] The infinite, although illimitable and incapable of increase, is not necessarily all. An infinite body must include all bodies, infinite space all portions of space, and infinite duration all periods of duration. Hence Mr. Mansel says that an infinite being must of necessity include within itself all actual and all possible forms or modes of being. So said Spinoza, many of the schoolmen, and even many Christian theologians. The sense in which Spinoza and Mansel make this assertion is the fundamental principle of pantheism. Mr. Mansel, as we have seen, escapes that conclusion by appealing to faith, and teaching that we are constrained to believe what reason pronounces to be impossible, which itself is an impossibility. The sense in which theologians teach that an infinite being must comprehend within it all being, is, that in the infinite is the cause or

ground of all that is actual or possible. Thus Howe says, "Necessary being must include all being." But he immediately adds, not in the same way, "It comprehends all being, besides what itself is, as having had, within the compass of its productive power, whatsoever hath actually sprung from it; and having within the compass of the same power, whatsoever is still possible to be produced." This, however, is not the proper meaning of the words, nor is it the sense in which they are generally used. What the words mean, and what they are generally intended to mean by those who use them is, that there is only one being in the universe; that the finite is merely the *modus existendi*, or manifestation of the infinite. Thus Cousin says, God must be "infinite and finite together . . . . at the summit of being and at its humblest degree . . . at once God, nature, and humanity." A thing may be infinite in its own nature without precluding the possibility of the existence of things of a different nature. An infinite spirit does not forbid the assumption of the existence of matter. There may even be many infinites of the same kind, as we can imagine any number of infinite lines. The infinite, therefore, is not all. An infinite spirit is a spirit to whose attributes as a spirit no limits can be set. It no more precludes the existence of other spirits than infinite goodness precludes the existence of finite goodness, or infinite power the existence of finite power. God is infinite in being because no limit can be assigned to His perfections, and because He is present in all portions of space. A being is said to be present wherever it perceives and acts. As God perceives and acts everywhere, He is everywhere present. This, however, does not preclude the presence of other beings. A multitude of men even may perceive an act at the same time and place. Besides, we have very little knowledge of the relation which spirit bears to space. We know that bodies occupy portions of space to the exclusion of other bodies; but we do not know that spirits may not coexist in the same portion of space. A legion of demons dwelt in one man.—*Ibid.*

II. The Infinity of God in Relation to Space.

[10896] The infinitude of God, so far as space is concerned, includes His immensity and His omnipresence. These are not different attributes, but one and the same attribute, viewed under different aspects. His immensity is the infinitude of His being, viewed as belonging to His nature from eternity. He fills immensity with His presence. His omnipresence is the infinitude of His being, viewed in relation to His creatures. He is equally present with all His creatures, at all times, and in all places. He is not far from any one of us. "The Lord is in this place," may be said with equal truth and confidence, everywhere. Theologians are accustomed to distinguish three modes of presence in space. Bodies are in space circumscriptively. They are bounded by it. Spirits are in space definitively. They have an *ubi*. They are not everywhere, but only somewhere. God is in space repletively. He fills all space. In other words, the limitations of space have no reference to Him. He is not absent from any portion of space, nor more present in one portion than in another. This of course is not to be understood of extension or diffusion. Extension is a property of matter, and cannot be predisented as a spiritual Being, without form, invisible, whom no man hath seen or can see; dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, and full of glory; as not only the creator, and preserver, but as the governor of all things; as everywhere present, and everywhere imparting life, and securing order; present in every blade of grass, yet guiding Arcturus in His course, marshalling the stars as a host, calling them by their names; present also in every human soul, giving it understanding, endowing it with gifts, working in it both to will and to do. The human heart is in His hands; and He turneth it even as the rivers of water are turned. Wherever, throughout the universe, there is evidence of mind in material causes, there, according to the Scriptures, is God, controlling and guiding those causes to the accomplishment of His wise designs. He is in all, and over all things; yet essentially different from all, being over all, independent, and infinitely exalted. This immensity and omnipresence of God, therefore, is the ubiquity of the Divine essence, and consequently of the Divine power, wisdom, and goodness. As the birds in the air and the fish in the sea, so also are we always surrounded and sustained by God. It is thus that He is infinite in His being, without absorbing all created beings into His own essence, but sustaining all in their individual subsistence, and in the exercise of their own powers.—*Ibid.*

5

ETERNITY.

I. The Evidences of God's Eternity.

1 His eternity is evidenced by His self-existence and immutable nature.

[10897] God hath life in Himself: John v. 26, "The Father hath life in Himself." He is the "living God," therefore "steadfast for ever" (Dan. vi. 26). He hath life by His essence, not by participation. He is a sun to give light and life to all creatures, but receives not light or life from anything, and therefore He hath an unlimited life; not a drop of life, but a fountain; not a spark of a limited life, but a life transcending all bounds. He hath life in Himself; all creatures have their life in Him, and from Him. He that hath life in Himself doth necessarily exist, and could never be made to exist, for then He had not life in himself, but in that which

made Him to exist, and gave Him life. What doth necessarily exist, therefore, exists from eternity; what hath being of itself could never be produced in time, could not want being one moment, because it hath being from its essence, without influence of any efficient cause. When God pronounced His name, "I am that I am," angels and men were in being; the world had been created above two thousand four hundred years. Moses, to whom He then speaks, was in being; yet God only *is*, because He only hath the fountain of being in Himself, but all that they were was a rivulet from Him. He hath from nothing else that He doth subsist; everything else hath its subsistence from Him as their root, as the beam from the sun, as the rivers and fountains from the sea. All life is seated in God, as in its proper throne, in its most perfect purity. God is life; it is in Him originally, radically, therefore eternally. He is a pure act, nothing but vigour and act. He hath by His nature that life which others have by His grant; whence the apostle saith (1 Tim. vi. 16) not only that He is immortal, but He "hath immortality" in a full possession, fee-simple, not depending upon the will of another, but containing all things within Himself. He that hath life in Himself, and is from Himself, cannot but be. He always was, because He received His being from no other, and none can take away that being which was not given by another. If there were any space before He did exist, then there were something which made Him to exist; life would not then be in Him, but in that which produced Him into being. He could not then be God, but that other which gave Him being would be God. And to say God sprung into being by chance, when we see nothing in the world that is brought forth by chance, but hath some cause of its existence, would be vain; for since God is a being, chance, which is nothing, could not bring forth something; and by the same reason that He sprung up by chance, He might totally vanish by chance.—*Charnock.*

[10898] God, who alone is eternal, because He Himself is the essence of eternity, alone has real and necessary existence. All other beings are mere shadows, and are rather indications of His existence than existences themselves. Yet man, though not an eternal being, is formed for an endless existence. He has faculties which time cannot employ, and capacities which time cannot fill; and he can find the perfection of his own nature only in a perfect conjunction with the eternity of God.—*J. Burt.*

[10899] If God were not eternal, He were not immutable in His nature. It is contrary to the nature of immutability to be without eternity; for whatsoever begins, is changed in its passing from not being to being. Had He not been eternal there had been the greatest change from nothing to something. A change of the essence is greater than a change of purpose. God is a sun, glittering always in the same glory; no growing up in youth, no passing on to age! If He were not without succession, standing in one point of eternity, there would be a change from past to present, from present to future. The eternity of God is a shield against all kind of mutability. If anything sprang up in the essence of God that was not there before, He could not be said to be either an eternal or an unchanged substance. — *Charnock.*

[10900] The advocates of what is called the eternity of matter would gain nothing, even by success, unless they could also prove that matter is necessarily existent: for, to exist eternally, and to be an Eternal Existence, are essentially and infinitely different. God is eternal by the necessity of His being. His eternity is one with Himself.—*J. Burt.*

[10901] Mysterious and incomprehensible as eternity is, it is not the less so when contemplated purely as a mental abstraction, than when applied to the existence of Deity; and however mysterious to contemplate something as really eternal, it is an impossibility to avoid admitting it as a truth. To deny it, is an attempt to escape from a mystery by plunging into an absurdity. The difficulty and mysteriousness in relation to eternity is not theological, but metaphysical; and a similar difficulty is felt in relation to all mathematical infinities. While the great truth of God's eternal existence defies our comprehension, it equally defies our contradiction, and irresistibly commands our assent. —*Wm. Cooke, D.D.*

2 His eternity is evidenced by His infinite perfection and primary causation.

[10902] God could not be an infinitely perfect being, if He were not eternal. A finite duration is inconsistent with infinite perfection. Whatsoever is contracted within the limits of time cannot swallow up all perfections in itself. God hath an unsearchable perfection: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" (Job xi. 7). He cannot be found out, He is infinite, because He is incomprehensible. Incomprehensibility ariseth from an infinite perfection, which cannot be fathomed by the short lines of man's understanding. His essence, in regard of its diffusion and in regard of its duration, is incomprehensible, as well as His action. If God, therefore, had beginning, He could not be infinite; if not infinite, He did not possess the highest perfection, because a perfection might be conceived beyond it. If His being could fail, He were not perfect. Can that deserve the name of the highest perfection which is capable of corruption and dissolution? To be finite and limited is the greatest imperfection, for it consists in a denial of being. He could not be the most blessed being if He were not always so, and should not for ever remain to be so; and whatsoever perfections He had, would be soured by the thought that in time they would cease, and so could not be pure perfections, because not

permanent; but He is "blessed from everlasting to everlasting" (Psa. xli. 13). Had He a beginning, He could not have all perfection without limitation; He would have been limited by that which gave Him beginning; that which gave Him being would be God and not Himself, and so more perfect than He. But since God is the most sovereign perfection, than which nothing can be imagined perfecter by the most capacious understanding, He is certainly eternal; being infinite, nothing can be added to Him, nothing detracted from Him, God would not be the first cause of all, if He were not eternal. But He is "the first and the last" (Rev. i. 8); the first cause of all things, the last end of all things. That which is the first cannot begin to be: it were not then the first. It cannot cease to be: whatsoever is dissolved, is dissolved into that whereof it doth consist, which was before it, and then it was not the first. The world might not have been; it was once nothing: it must have some cause to call it out of nothing. Nothing hath no power to make itself something; there is a superior cause, by whose will and power it comes into being, and so gives all the creatures their distinct forms. This power cannot but be eternal, it must be before the world; the founder must be before the foundation, and His existence must be from eternity, or we must say nothing did exist from eternity.—*Charnock.*

II. The Nature of God's Eternity.

1 It is without beginning.

[10903] God is behind all time. "In the beginning:" when was that? By what innumerable stages, through what immense eras, the imagination must travel in order to reach it! Not the least of the many benefits which modern science has conferred upon us, is the enlargement of our conceptions concerning time. How vast a period is a thousand years! How far off it seems since Alfred the Great ascended the English throne, yet it is not quite a thousand years ago. Last week I saw in the Exeter Museum a mummy that is supposed to have been embalmed in the days of Hezekiah. What marvellous revolutions have taken place since that mummy was a living man! How old we should have thought him had he lived till now! Yet he would have been quite a juvenile beside Adam, had *he* not drawn upon himself the curse of death. How far off seems the time when our first parents dwelt in paradise! And yet what an insignificant period is *that* compared with the ages which have elapsed since the granite which forms the first courses of our new chapel was a molten fluid! What a mystery is time, stretching ever backward, past the hour when at the laying of the earth's foundations "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy!" past the hour when those "morning stars" and "sons of God" were called into being! But when in thought we have reached this dateless period, when we have gone beyond it, and find ourselves in a vast void where no star shines and no seraph sings, even then we find ourselves in the presence of God. We can think of all things and persons besides Him coming into existence, but the thought of the birth of God is one which the mind refuses to entertain. He is the great I Am, to whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. He is "the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy." Let us bow in reverence before Him. "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God."—*R. A. Bertram.*

[10904] Through all the ages past Jehovah lived; through those vast periods of time, during the slow formation of the prodigious strata which build up the earth's foundations, He lived; ere the primitive atoms of matter had coalesced into globular masses, He lived: all the cycles through which they have run are as nothing compared with His eternal duration. Nay, if we recede still farther into the awful abyss of His duration, until we pass beyond the first moment of creation—when the universe was unborn—when there was neither a crawling worm nor a radiant seraph—when there was neither a revolving world nor a solitary atom—when the throne of the Eternal One was not surrounded by cherub, seraph, or the firstborn of spirits—when universal Nature was a universal blank—when the holy place itself was occupied only by the resplendent Shechinah, and Jehovah dwelt in loneliness, without a purpose unfolded by any objective manifestation—even then we are only on the frontiers of His eternity; and the ages through which imagination has pierced, or may yet pierce, compared with His existence, are only as a unit to the infinite. During those infinite ages Jehovah was what He is now; His perfections, like His essence, are all eternal; and during those infinite ages which are yet to come, He will remain the same, without addition or diminution, in the essential attributes of His nature.—*Wm. Cooke, D.D.*

[10905] It is a vast deal easier for the mind to push onward into what is to come than backward into what is past. Let a thing exist, and we can, in a certain sense, master the thought of its existence being indefinitely continued. But if, in searching out the beginnings of its existence, we find no period at which it was not, then presently the mind is confounded, and the idea is too vast for its most giant-like grapplings. This is exactly the case with regard to the Godhead. We are able, comparatively speaking, to take in the truth, that God shall never cease to be. But we have no capacity whatsoever for this other truth, that God hath always been. I could go back a thousand ages, or a million ages, ay, or a thousand millions of ages; and though the mind might be wearied with traversing so vast a district of time, yet if I then reached a point where pausing I might

say, here Deity began, here Godhead first rose into being, the worn spirit would recruit itself, and feel that the end compensated the toil of the journeying. But it is the being unable to assign any beginning; rather, it is the knowing that there never was beginning; this it is, we say, which hopelessly distances every finite intelligence; the most magnificent, but certainly, at the same time, the most overpowering truth, being that He, at whose word the universe commenced, knew never Himself a moment of commencement.—*H. Melvill, B.D.*

[10906] Eternity is not, as men believe,
Before and after us an endless line.
No, 'tis a circle, infinitely great,
All the circumference with creations thronged;
God at the centre dwells, beholding all.
And as we move in this eternal round,
The finite portion which alone we see
Behind us, is the past: what lies before
We call the future. But to Him who dwells
Far at the centre, equally remote
From every point of the circumference,
Both are alike, the future and the past.
—*Joseph John Murphy.*

2 It is without end.

[10907] He always was, always is, and always will be what He is. He remains always the same in being; so far from any change, that no shadow of it can touch Him (James i. 17). He will continue in being as long as He hath already enjoyed it; and if we could add never so many millions of years together, we are still as far from an end as from a beginning, for "the Lord shall endure for ever" (Psa. ix. 7). As it is impossible He should not be, being from all eternity, so it is impossible that He should not be to all eternity. The Scripture is most plentiful in testimony of this eternity of God, *à parte post*, or after the creation of the world. He is said to "live for ever" (Rev. iv. 9, 10). The earth shall perish, but God shall endure for ever, and His years shall have no end (Psa. cii. 27). Plants and animals grow up from small beginnings, arrive to their full growth and decline again, and have always remarkable alterations in their nature; but there is no declination in God by all the revolutions of time.—*Charnock.*

3 It is without succession.

[10908] The being of creatures is successive; the being of God is permanent, and remains entire with all its perfections unchanged in an infinite duration. He is not in His essence this day what he was not before, or will be the next day and year what He is not now. All His perfections are most perfect in Him every moment, before all ages, after all ages. As He hath his whole essence undivided in every place, as well as in immense space, so He hath all His being in one moment of time, as well as in infinite intervals of time. Some illustrate the difference between eternity and time by the similitude of a tree or a rock standing upon the side of a river or shore of the sea; the tree stands, always the same and unmoved, while the waters of the river glide along at the foot. The flux is in the river, but the tree acquires nothing but a diverse respect and relation of presence to the various parts of the river as they flow. The waters of the river press on, and push forward one another, and what the river hath this minute it hath not the same the next; so are all sublimary things in a continual flux. And though the angels have no substantial change, yet they have an accidental, for the actions of the angels this day are not the same individual actions which they performed yesterday; but in God there is no change, He always remains the same. Of a creature it may be said, he was, or he is, or he shall be. Of God it cannot be said but only He is; He is what He always was, and He is what He always will be; whereas a creature is what he was not, and will be what he is not now. As it may be said of the flame of a candle, it is flame, but it is not the same individual flame as was before, nor is it the flame that will be presently after; there is a continual dissolution of it into air, and a continual supply for the generation of more; while it continues it may be said there is a flame, yet not entirely one, but in a succession of parts: so of man it may be said, he is a succession of parts; but he is not the same that he was, and will not be the same that he is. But God is the same without any succession of parts, and of time; of Him, it may be said, He is; He is no more now than He was, and He shall be no more hereafter than He is. God possesses a firm and absolute being, always constant to Himself; He sees all things sliding under Him in a continual variation; He beholds the revolutions in the world without any change of His most glorious and immovable nature. All other things pass from one state to another, from their original to their eclipse and destruction: but God possesses His being in one indivisible point, having neither beginning, end, nor middle. —*Ibid.*

[10909] There can be nothing lost to a being whose existence is eternal. His existence and perfections are unimpaired, and the consciousness of present existence—conjoined with the knowledge that his existence can never terminate—is no imperfection, but an infinite excellence; and, indeed, the foundation of every other excellence.

The consciousness which human beings have of successive duration, does not detract from their nature or happiness; nor can we conceive they would have realized a more exalted state, or a greater degree of enjoyment, if their mental constitution had been so formed as to render them unconscious of their succession. On the contrary, our knowledge and expectation of immortality contribute greatly to our happiness, and evince our superiority of nature; and what thus marks the excellence of our nature cannot be an imperfection in the Deity. We do indeed change; we lose both knowledge and happiness, and again we receive accessions to

both ; but all our changes arise, not from a consciousness of succession in our duration, but from the imperfection of our nature. We lose what we have, because of our feebleness ; and we receive accessions, because we have not sufficiency in ourselves. Defect, limitation, and dependence characterize our nature—and hence we change ; fulness, infinitude, and all-sufficiency characterize the Deity—and hence, during the flow of ages, he remains the same.—*Wm. Cooke, D.D.*

[10910] Our reasonings about eternity are entangled in our impressions of time. Who is there that does not conceive of time as a portion of eternity? or at least as a point inserted between an eternity past and an eternity to come? As if eternity were suspended during the interval of time, and will resume its course when time shall be no more. We look back to the creation ; before that it was what we call eternity ; we look forward to the dissolution of the universe, when it will be what we call eternity again. And this it is which, by confusing the absoluteness of eternity with the successiveness of time, perplexes our reasonings, and darkens, though it cannot blot out, the demonstration of the eternity of God.—*J. Burt.*

III. The Distinctive Feature of God's Eternity.

1 It is only proper to Himself, and not communicable.

[10911] It is as great a madness to ascribe eternity to the creature as to deprive the Lord of the creature of eternity. It is so proper to God that when the apostle would prove the deity of Christ, he proves it by His immutability and eternity, as well as His creative power: "Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail" (Heb. i. 10–12). The argument had no strength if eternity belonged essentially to any but God ; and therefore He is said "only to have immortality" (1 Tim. vi. 16). All other things receive their being from Him, and can be deprived of their being by Him. All things depend on Him, He of none. All other things are like clothes, which would consume if God preserved them not. Immortality is appropriated to God, *i.e.*, an independent immortality. Angels and souls have an immortality, but by donation from God, not by their own essence ; dependent upon their Creator, not necessary in their own nature. God might have annihilated them after He had created them ; so that their duration cannot properly be called an eternity, it being extrinsical to them, and depending upon the will of their Creator, by whom they may be extinguished. It is not an absolute and necessary, but a precarious immortality. Whatsoever is not God, is temporary ; whatsoever is eternal, is God. It is a contradiction to say a creature can be eternal : as nothing eternal is created, so nothing created is eternal. What is distinct from the nature of God cannot be eternal, eternity being the essence of God. Every creature, in the notion of a creature, speaks a dependence on some cause, and therefore cannot be eternal. As it is repugnant to the nature of God not to be eternal, so it is repugnant to the nature of a creature to be eternal ; for then a creature would be equal to the Creator, and the Creator, or the cause, would not be before the creature, or effect. It would be all one to admit many gods, as many eternals ; and all one to say God can be created, as to say a creature can be uncreated, which is to be eternal.—*Charnock.*

IV. Man's Attitude as regards the Eternal God.

1 Should be that of devoutest homage, love, reverence, and fidelity.

[10912] If God be eternal, how worthy He is of our choicest affections, and strongest desires of communion with Him! Is not everything to be valued according to the greatness of its being? How then should we love Him who is not only lovely in His nature, but eternally lovely, having from everlasting all these perfections centered in Himself which appear in time! If everything be lovely by how much the more it partakes of the nature of God, who is the chief good, how much more infinitely lovely is God, who is superior to all other goods, and eternally so! Not a God of a few minutes, months, years, or millions of years ; not of the dregs of time or the top of time, but of eternity ; above time, unconceivably immense beyond time. The loving Him infinitely, perpetually, is an act of homage due to Him for His eternal excellency. We may give Him the one, since our souls are immortal, though we cannot the other, because they are finite. Since He encloseth in Himself all the excellences of heaven and earth for ever, He should have an affection not only of time in this world, but of eternity in the future ; and if we did not owe Him a love for what we are to Him, we owe him a love for what He is in Himself ; and more for what He is than for what He is to us. He is more worthy of our affections because He is the eternal God, than because He is our Creator ; because He is more excellent in His nature than in his transient actions. The beams of His goodness to us are to direct our thoughts and affections to Him ; but His own eternal excellency ought to be the ground and foundation of our affections to Him. And truly, since nothing but God is eternal, nothing but God is worth the loving ; and we do but a just right to our love, to pitch it upon that which can always possess us and be possessed by us, upon an object that cannot deceive our affection, and put it out of countenance by a dissolution.—*Ibid.*

[10913] While its bright evidence induces our assent as an intellectual necessity, it transcends our powers even as infinity surpasses unity ; and its overpowering grandeur lays us prostrate before the Most High. We feel,

indeed, the ground beneath us is a rock of adamant, which nothing can remove ; but the awful and interminable line of duration, stretching into the past and the future, bewilders our imagination, and makes us shrink into insignificance.—*Wm. Cooke, D.D.*

[10914] And if our happiness consists in being like to God, we should imitate Him in loving Him as He loves Himself, and as long as He loves Himself. God cannot do more to Himself than love Himself; He can make no addition to His essence nor diminution from it. What should we do less to an eternal Being than to bestow affections upon Him, like His own to Himself, since we can find nothing so durable as Himself, for which we should love it! He only is worthy of our best service. The "Ancient of Days" is to be served before all that are younger than Himself; our best obedience is due to Him as a God of unconfined excellency. Everything that is excellent deserves a veneration suitable to its excellency. As God is infinite, He hath right to a boundless service ; as He is eternal, He hath right to a perpetual service. As service is a debt of justice upon the account of the excellency of His nature, so a perpetual service is as much a debt of justice upon the account of His eternity. If God be infinite and eternal, He merits an honour and comportment from His creatures suited to the unlimited perfection of His nature and the duration of His being. How worthy is the Psalmist's resolution, "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live ; I will sing praises to my God while I have any being" (Psa. civ. 33). It is the use which he makes of the endless duration of the glory of God, and will extend to all other service as well as praise. To serve other things, or to serve ourselves, is to waste a service upon that which is nothing. In devoting ourselves to God, we serve Him that is ; that was, so as that He never began ; is to come, so as that He never shall end ; by whom all things are what they are : who hath both eternal knowledge to remember our service, and eternal goodness to reward it.—*Charnock.*

[10915] Infinity is the retirement in which perfect love and wisdom only dwell with God. In infinity and eternity the sceptic sees an abyss, in which all is lost. I see in them the residence of Almighty power, in which my reason and my wishes find equally a firm support. Here, holding by the pillars of heaven, I exist —I stand fast.—*Miller.*

6

UNSEARCHABLENESS.

I. Nature and Significance of the Doctrine of Divine Unsearchableness.

1 **The First Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Father, is and must ever be beyond the grasp of our senses and faculties.**

[10916] He is the King eternal, immortal and *invisible*. No man hath seen God at any time. No man can see His face and live. He maketh darkness, His pavilions round about Him dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. It is no less generally agreed that the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, is, and ever will be, beyond the direct and immediate notice of all creatures. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit." He broods over the face of nature ; garnishes the heavens ; converts the soul ; opens our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of God's word ; sanctifies our affections ; fills the saints with joy ; fits God's people for glory ; divides His gifts severally as He will, and yet "we know not the way of the Spirit." We never saw Him, and we never shall see Him as disembodied spirits see each other. We may know Him by His word and works, by His enlightening, sanctifying, and comforting influences, but never by sight. He is far beyond the grasp of both our bodily and mental faculties. The brightest manifestation of the Godhead ever yet made, or ever to be made, is in the incarnation of the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity. We may behold His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth ; but we can go no further. This manifestation is for all practical purposes sufficient. It is clear and glorious, yet not intolerable by reason of excessive brightness. Christ said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He thus taught us that the best possible discovery we could make of the Godhead was through the veil of His own flesh. But even in Christ divinity shone forth under great obscuration. The transfiguration, the ascension in a bright cloud, the appearance to Saul of Tarsus after his ascension, and the glory in which John the divine saw Him, may give us some faint conception of His everlasting person. But we know Him chiefly by His works and teachings and sufferings. Thousands saw Him with their bodily eyes, and knew no more of God than before. So that we may safely say that God is, and for ever shall be, wholly unperceivable by any of our senses or faculties. If any object that it is promised that the pure in heart "shall see God," the answer is that all God's word shall be fulfilled ; but the meaning of that language evidently is, not that they shall meet God face to face and behold His

unveiled divinity, but that they shall enjoy God as revealed in His word and works and ordinances in the person of His Son, and by the influences of His Spirit. Now whatever eludes all our senses and faculties is to us necessarily clad with mysteriousness. Whatever is concealed from every perceptive power excludes the possibility of original knowledge. In such a case learning without instruction is impossible. The difficulty is heightened by every step we take towards that which is in its nature boundless. But when our thoughts go out after Him who is absolutely infinite, we are soon enveloped in a profound obscurity, which no created faculties can penetrate.—*Rev. W. S. Plumer, D.D.*

[10917] We cannot have a full and comprehensive knowledge of God in this life because of our incapacity. Though the ocean hath water enough to fill the largest vessel, yet it can communicate no more to it than the vessel is capable to contain: so here, there is enough in God to fill the largest understanding, but our capacity is very shallow. You may exceed all other subjects in your expressions and apprehensions of them; but here is a subject wherein there can be no excess: yea, there is no access to it; for He "dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto." The mind is much more comprehensive than words; yet our minds are too narrow to conceive Him. Even the heart of a Solomon, though enlarged as the sand on the sea-shore, was not large enough for the great God. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." God is sometimes said to "dwell in darkness," to show our weakness and incapacity to apprehend Him as He is in Himself. "He made darkness His secret place," says the Psalmist; "His pavilion round about Him was dark waters."—*Wisheart.*

2 So wonderful are the perfections of God compared with the attributes of the most exalted creature, that His nature and ways must always be mysterious just in proportion to our knowledge of their extent.

[10918] God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. All men and angels are finite, the creatures of yesterday, liable to change, and of themselves—without God—have neither wisdom nor virtue. Man is the very lowest order of rational beings, and has by sin greatly debased himself. He is blinded by many passions and prejudices. "Every man is brutish in his knowledge." How then should man, as compared with God, have knowledge either extensive or accurate? This is no surprising thing. Our elder and nobler brethren, the elect angels, who have, ever since they were created, stood around the throne of the Eternal, and drunk of the river of truth as it flows forth fresh from its fountain, are yet, as compared with God, foolish and ignorant. "He chargeth His angels with folly." "Though glorious and holy creatures, they are fallible and mutable, except as upheld and confirmed by the Lord. They execute His wise and righteous counsels; but would soon show their want of wisdom, if trusted to manage any part of the government of the world, according to their own mind. Nay, compared with the infinite knowledge and wisdom of God, they are chargeable with ignorance, being utterly unable to comprehend the vast designs of the great Creator and Lord of the universe, except as He pleases to unfold them. How much less then may any man be trusted!" God's plans embrace all creatures and all worlds. They comprehend the whole universe. The greatest stretch of the human mind never extended to the affairs of an empire, a province, a city, a family, or even of a person. God's plans are founded on the most perfect knowledge of all things. Man's information is very imperfect both in scope and in degree. It would be marvellous if a little child should understand all the measures of a wise ruler. Yet that would be but one finite being comprehending the measures of another. But for a creature to know God's plans would be for finite to grasp infinite. Until man can hold the sea in the hollow of his hand, measure the azure vault of heaven with a carpenter's rule, sweep the outskirts of creation with a compass of his own construction, and tell all worlds, and give their number, weight, and measure, let not his arrogance swell to the monstrous bloating of imagining that he can comprehend God. If he does not know all things formed, how can he search out Him that formed them?—*Rev. W. S. Plumer, D.D.*

[10919] The decrees of Providence are inscrutable. In spite of man's shortsighted endeavours to dispose of events according to his own wishes and his own purposes, there is an Intelligence beyond his reason, which holds the scales of justice and promotes his well-being, in spite of his puny efforts.—*Morier.*

3 God has shown Himself to be incomprehensible in His works of creation.

[10920] He doubtless might have made more worlds and more orders of being than He has; yet who knows all the works that God has made? There are known to be more than eight thousand species of the beetle alone. The tribes of creatures in our world, which are invisible to the naked eye, are said to be far more numerous than all those which we can see. If the tribes are more numerous, the individuals are probably as hundreds of millions to one. There are supposed to be perceptible by powerful glasses as many as three or four hundred millions of fixed stars. If each of these is a sun and the centre of a system of worlds like our own, how vast is the universe! It consists of matter organized and unorganized, and of spirit

mortal and immortal. The Bible does not deny that brutes have something in their nature which may be called spirit. But then it teacheth that the spirit of a beast goeth downward to the earth, and the spirit of man goeth upward. At death it returns to God who gave it. All these organisms, animate and inanimate, and all these spirits, mortal and immortal, were called out of nonentity by the Almighty. It is impossible to conceive of any exertion of power greater than that, by which something is made out of nothing. Yet out of nothing God made all things, our bodies and our souls, all we are, all we see, all that is within us, above us, beneath us, around us. Nor did any part of the work of creation cost Him any labour. "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." He said, "Let there be light, and there was light." "He stretched out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." "He bindeth up the water in His thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them." "The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at His reproof." Nothing is too hard for Him. He neither groweth faint nor is weary.—*Rev. W. S. Plumer, D.D.*

4 In God's government and providence are several things which must ever make them incomprehensible to us.

[10921] How noiseless are most of His doings. When in spring Jehovah would reanimate all nature, bring into activity myriads of insects, give growth to millions of seeds, and clothe mountains and valleys in living green, it is all a silent work. When he would subvert a universal monarchy, long before the time set for that purpose, he puts it into the heart of a great ruler to build a bridge, and for that purpose to change the channel of a river for a season. This is all done without signs in heaven, or war in the elements. In the fulness of time the same river is, by means the simplest, diverted from its channel, Belshazzar is slain, Babylon is a prey to the invader, and a universal empire is dissolved. Commonly when God depopulates cities and kingdoms, His messengers pass silently along, and do their work ere men are aware. There was no noise of preparation for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The morning of their eternal overthrow was as calm as any on which the sun had risen upon them. The destroying angel who slew the first-born of Egypt spread his mighty wings over the land, and from them dropped down death on every habitation of man and beast. Yet all was quiet as the grave, till the wail of bereavement filled the land with terror. God makes a world with less noise than that produced by man when he makes a coffin. When Jehovah spread out the heavens and set up their unshaken pillars, there was not so much as the sound of a hammer. When on our best railroads we travel at the rate of sixty miles an hour, the rumbling noise is heard afar, the sight of our speed is startling to every spectator, and we cannot divest ourselves of apprehension. But ever since we were born we have been riding on a world moved by God at the rate of more than sixty-two thousand miles every hour. And yet who has been afraid? who has heard any startling sound? This is the more wonderful because the motion of the earth is not simple but compound. Yet in the midst of all this motion we can hear the chirping of a bird, or the dropping of a pin.—*Ibid.*

[10922] Will God regenerate a world? It shall not be done by the ministry of angels, but to the poor, condemned, and dying, the riches of His mercy shall be borne in earthen vessels. Will God subdue the world to knowledge, to peace, and righteousness? Humble men shall be His ambassadors. Will He make of His people a glorious church? "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence." Look at that good man surrounded by an infuriated throng. Each one gnashes with his teeth, and is keen for his prey. At the giving of the signal, stone follows stone. Gash after gash is made on the pious sufferer. The blood streams from his head and body. Hard by him stands a small young man, drinking in with malignant joy the groans that fall from the martyr's lips. Like a young tiger, hitherto fed on milk, but now tasting blood, he becomes furious against all who call on the name of Jesus. He breathes out threatenings and slaughter. He sheds innocent blood without remorse and without cessation. Who would believe that this persecutor was the chosen of God, and should yet, with unparalleled zeal and incredible success, preach Jesus, call sinners to repentance, and give joy and courage to the trembling disciples? Yet such was God's plan, and it was all executed. God is a sovereign. His counsel shall stand. He will do all His pleasure. He rejected all the seven elder sons of Jesse, and chose the little boy, David, who had been left with the sheep, and made him king of His people, and the sweet singer of Israel. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Most of the great, useful, and honoured men of the next generation are now poor boys unnoticed by the proud, buffeting difficulties, and forming vigorous characters under the influence of neglect and adversity.—*Ibid.*

II. Scriptural Assertions concerning this Attribute.

1 The incomprehensibility of God's nature and ways is often asserted in His Word.

[10923] To cite all the texts pertinent to the proof would be tedious. Take a short selection of them. The book of Job is probably the oldest inspired record. In it we find these words: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea:" "God doeth great things and unsearchable, marvellous things without number:" "He is wise in heart and mighty in strength. . . . He doeth great things past finding out, yea, and wonders without number." "Lo these are parts of His ways, but how little a portion is heard of Him:" "God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive with Him? for He giveth not account of any of His matters:" "We cannot order our speech by reason of darkness. . . . With God is terrible majesty. Touching the Almighty we cannot find Him out: He is excellent in power, and in judgement, and in plenty of justice. . . . He respecteth not any that are wise in heart." "Behold God is great, and we know Him not:" "God thundereth marvellously with His voice: great things doeth He, which we cannot comprehend." The same doctrine is taught by Moses in the Pentateuch, "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God:" by David, "Thy judgments are a great deep:" "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; His greatness is unsearchable:" by Asaph, "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known:" by a later Psalmist, "Great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite:" by Solomon, "No man can find out the work that God doeth from the beginning to the end."—*Ibid.*

III. Homiletical Hints.

1 As to the mystery of scriptural doctrines.

(1) *We ought not to be offended with the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, nor with the doctrine of the Trinity, nor with any other truth of the gospel, on account of their mysteriousness.*

[10924] It is not more incomprehensible that Christ should have two distinct natures united in one person for ever than that God should have life in Himself. He who can explain the latter, will never be confounded by the former. How existence can be without production is a knot which no creature can untie. To deny the self-existence of God is atheism. To doubt it is to tremble over the darkest gulf that ever yawned. Yet who can understand its nature? But the fact is beyond a question. So the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ is clearly revealed in every possible form of speech. He is repeatedly called God and Jehovah. He is said to do Divine works, to receive, by God's command, Divine honours, and to exercise Divine prerogatives. He created all things. He upholds all things. He forgives sins. He made the worlds. He is worshipped by all holy angels and redeemed men. He shall judge the world. These things are so clearly revealed of Him that it is perverseness to deny them. Let no man be offended in Christ because of His glory or the mystery that surrounds Him.—*Ibid.*

[10925] It is indeed a mystery to us how Christ may be both God and man. But unless we honour the Son as we honour the Father, we shall be found in open rebellion against God. Jesus Himself said, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."

Nor is the glorious mystery of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead offensive to pious minds. It is for a rejoicing that He who made us, He who redeemed us, and He who sanctifies us, is the one eternal, unchangeable, indivisible Jehovah, subsisting in three persons. The favourite objection urged against this doctrine, from the days of Celsus and Lucian down to this hour, is its mysteriousness. Lucian's "One three, three one" is repeated in our day by persons who would be very unwilling to enrol their names with his, though they take up the ribaldry and sit in the seat of that ancient scorner. That everything pertaining to God is, in some points, inscrutable, is not denied. Were it otherwise, who could adore Him? When I perfectly understand all about a being, I know that he is either my inferior or my equal, so I cannot pay him religious worship. The pious Hervey well says, "I am no more surprised that some revealed truths should amaze my understanding than that the blazing sun should dazzle my eyes." Robert Hall, speaking of inscrutable things in religion, says: "We rejoice that they are mysterious, so far from being ashamed of them on that accont; since the principal reason why they are, and must ever continue such, is derived from their elevation, from their unsearchable riches and undefinable grandeur." Dr. Leonard Woods, of Andover, says: "The end of our being does not require that we should completely comprehend either the Creator or the creation. Were we called to exercise dominion over the universe, it would indeed be necessary that we should be omniscient. But for those whose business it is to obey and submit, omniscience is not necessary. . . . . On inquiry, it will appear that all the most momentous and useful truths relate to objects which are pre-eminently incomprehensible." Bishop Waterland says: "No just objection can be made against the importance of any doctrine, from its mysterious nature. The most mysterious of all are, in reality, the most important; not because they are mysterious, but because they relate to things Divine, which must of course, be mysterious to weak mortal, and, perhaps, to all creatures whatever. But

even mysterious doctrines have a bright side as well as a dark one ; and they are clear to look upon, though too deep to be seen through." Richard Baxter says : "The mystery of the incarnation alone may find you work to search and admire many ages."—*Ibid.*

2 As to the causes of spiritual blindness.

(1) *Sin and its attendant evils is the great obstruction to human conception of God.*

[10926] We are oftimes blinded with passions, love and fear, desire and anger, or some cloud interposing from the passions, so that we cannot see God and the things of God so clearly. In this imperfect state, our apprehensions of things take their rise from sense and sensible things. Our poor narrow minds are, as it were, immersed and drowned in bodies of clay, so that we cannot think of things without some corporeal representations. Hence it is that we are not able to conceive of God as He is : for although we labour to refine and spiritualize our thoughts of God, and aim at more raised and abstracted conceptions of His majesty, by separating that which is bodily from that which is spiritual in our fancy, some dregs of matter stick to our conceptions of Him ; so that we cannot frame any suitable pure notion of His abstracted nature.

The most enlarged capacity of the glorified saints shall not be large enough to comprehend all His glory. Therefore that manifestation of the glory of God in heaven must be proportioned to the capacity of the creature, else it would confound and not satisfy. God must infinitely condescend, even in heaven itself, and accommodate the appearances of His glory to the apprehensions of poor finite creatures. The saints in heaven shall know God perfectly, so far as creatures are capable to know Him ; yet they shall not know Him to perfection. They shall then see and know so much of God as will make them perfectly happy ; but to know Him to perfection is more than comes to the share of the happiness of any creature.

Is it so that God is unsearchable and incomprehensible? Then there is an unseen evil in sin ; more evil than any man ever knew or saw.—*Wisheart.*

3 As to the study of the Divine character.

(1) *God's unsearchableness is to be no excuse for neglecting the study of His Divine nature.*

[10927] Though God be incomprehensible, yet we should not give over the study of the knowledge of Him. Though we cannot comprehend Him, nor find Him out unto perfection; yet this will not excuse men's sloth and negligence, as if it were in vain to study to know Him. We must not sit down where we are, because we cannot go so far as we would. As we should labour to "know the love of Christ," though it be so vast and boundless that it "passeth knowledge :" so should we labour to know God, though He pass all created understandings. We should study to know the greatness of His power, love, mercy, &c., though His greatness in all these be such as our narrow hearts cannot comprehend. We should aim at and endeavour after perfection in the knowledge of God, as well in grace, though we cannot attain to either.

For clearing this, consider that there is some knowledge of God attainable in this life, though not a perfect nor comprehensive knowledge. Though He cannot be known as He is in Himself, yet He may be known so far as is needful for our salvation and comfort. You may know Him, so far as concerns your duty to Him, and your happiness in Him. You may know Him, so far, as out of love to Him, and fear of Him, to worship and serve Him ; and so far as to admire and adore His incomprehensible majesty, and to see that there is no happiness but in the enjoyment of Him. This is all the knowledge of God that is promised in this life, and all we can attain unto. And even with respect to this knowledge, none know so much of God but they may know more, and know Him better, and to better purpose. And though we cannot know all of God, yet we are bound to study all that may be known.—*Ibid.*

[10928] We should never suffer the plea of an imperfect knowledge of the nature and perfections of God to be made the foundation on which error and superstition and fanaticism may rear what fantastic structures they please. Ever let us be ready to admit our ignorance, to acknowledge the narrowness and imperfection of our noblest views of God and His works. In deep prostration we would bend before His throne, confessing that around that throne are clouds and darkness through which we feel ourselves unable to pierce. But let not this confession be turned from its rightful purpose of ministering to our humility and piety to that of serving only the interests of ignorance and delusion.—*Thos. Madge, D.D.*

4 As to the manner in which such study should be prosecuted.

(1) *The consideration of God's unsearchableness should be characterized by a spirit of reverence and awe.*

[10929] Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High, whom although to know be life, and joy to make mention of His name, yet our soundest knowledge is, to know that we know Him not as indeed He is, neither can know Him ; and our safest eloquence concerning Him is our silence, when we confess without confession that His glory is inexplicable, His greatness above our capacity and reach. He is above, and we upon earth ; therefore it behoveth our words to be wary and few.—*R. Hooker*, 1553-1600.

[10930] In a nature so unsearchable as that of God, and a scheme so vast as that of His universal government, there must be many things that creatures of our limited faculties cannot approach towards comprehending, and merely from want of comprehending may fancy

to be full of incredibilities, which, could we but know more, or would we but remember that we know so little, would instantly vanish. In matters, therefore, which we understand so very imperfectly, to set up human imagination against Divine authority ; to rely on crude notions that things are impossible which proper testimony shows to be true in fact ; or that God cannot be, or do, what by His own declarations He is, and hath done, betrays a disposition widely different from the modesty which becomes us.—*Abp. Secker.*

[10931] There is, in the first place, the extreme of bold and daring inquisitiveness, which heedlessly and unreflectingly rushes in where angels fear to tread ; which precipitately judges and rashly decides upon some of the most momentous topics that can come within the range of human contemplation. There is sometimes a levity of mind and a wantonness of imagination exercised in such inquiries, most alien from the true spirit with which they should be entered on, and most subversive of the purposes to which they should be applied.—*Thos. Madge, D.D.*

7

IMMUTABILITY.

I. The Applications of God's Immutability.

1 To His essence.

[10932] Change is the property of a dependent and imperfect nature, but an absolutely perfect being must be immutable. He cannot change by augmentation or improvement, for infinite and absolute perfection admits not of increase or progression. He cannot change by diminution or decay, for His whole nature and attributes—being self-existent—are not contingent, but necessary. He cannot change by deterioration ; for, on the one hand, as a perfect being, he cannot but delight in the continuance of His own perfection ; and, on the other hand, being independent, He is superior to all incidents and to the operation of all second causes. Unoriginated, eternal, and supreme, there is none to control Him, or to interfere with His purposes, or to affect the mode of His being ; absolutely perfect, there is neither limitation nor defect in His nature ; infinitely blessed, as well as infinitely excellent and glorious, He has nothing to attain which His nature does not already possess. All change, therefore, is impossible. His attributes being equally perfect, and equally eternal and necessary with His essence, they can no more change than His essence. He is, therefore, immutable.

[10933] God is unalterably fixed in His being, that not a particle of it can be lost from it, nor a mite added to it. If a man continue in being as long as Methuselah, nine hundred and sixty-nine years, yet there is not a day, nay, an hour, wherein there is not some alteration in His substance ; but in God there can be no alteration by the accession of anything to make His substance greater or better, or by diminution to make it less or worse. He who hath no being from another cannot but be always what He is. Again, because He is a Spirit, He is not subject to those mutations which are found in corporeal and bodily natures ; because He is an absolutely simple spirit, not having the least particle of composition, He is not capable of those changes which may be in created spirits.—*Charnock.*

2 To His knowledge.

(1) *Changeableness in knowledge would be repugnant to the wisdom and omnipotence which belongs to the notion of a Deity.*

[10934] That cannot be God that is not infinitely wise ; that cannot be infinitely wise that is either ignorant of or mistaken in his apprehension of any one thing. If God be changed in knowledge, it must be for want of wisdom : all change of this nature in creatures implies this defect preceding or accompanying it. Such a thought of God would have been unworthy of him that is "only wise," that hath no mate for wisdom (1 Tim. i. 17), none wise besides Himself. If He knew that thing this day which He knew not before, He would not be an only wise being, for a being that did not know everything at once might be conceived, and so a wiser being be apprehended by the mind of man. If God understood a thing at one time which he did not at another, He would be changed from ignorance to knowledge ; as if He could not do that this day which he could do to-morrow, he would be changed from impotence to power. He could not be always omniscient, because there might be yet something still to come which He yet knows not, though He may know all things that are past. What way soever you suppose a change, you must suppose a present or a past ignorance. If He be changed in His knowledge for the perfection of His understanding, He was ignorant before ; if His understanding be impaired by the change, He is ignorant after it. God hath known from all eternity all that which He can know, so that nothing is hid from Him ; He knows not at present any more than He hath known from eternity, and that which He knows now, He always knows : "All things are open and naked before Him" (Heb. iv. 13). A man is said to be changed in regard of knowledge when he knows that now which he did not know before, or knows that to be false now which he thought true before, or hath something for the object of his understanding now which he had not before.—*Ibid.*

3 To His will and purpose.

[10935] God's plans must of necessity be perfect, since they are devised by infinite love, arranged by infinite wisdom, established by infinite faithfulness, and executed by infinite

power. How can they then be altered or improved? True, God may change in His work, but this is not a change in His will. He may change His sentence, but not His decree. He may will a change, but not change His will. This would surely argue some defect in wisdom or foresight, which would be contrary to Divine perfection.—*G. S. Bowes.*

[10936] Nor is there any change in the essential purposes of God's moral government. It is not to be supposed that He came to the head of the affairs of the universe without a plan. It is not to be supposed that He made one thing, and then determined what next He would make. It is to be supposed (and nature as well as Scripture bears witness to it) that God saw the end from the beginning, that He follows a plan eternally ordained, and that the whole vast administration of creation is carried on in pursuance of certain great fixed ideas.—*Beecher.*

[10937] God has no *new* purposes. This follows, by unquestionable inference, from His immutability. Whatever was His purpose from eternity is His purpose now: and whatever is His purpose now was His purpose from eternity. Men change their determinations from instability of mind, from depravity of heart, from want of foresight to guard against unexpected occurrences, from want of power to accomplish what they designed, or from regard to the power or opinion of others. But what can change the purpose of God? Not instability of design, "for He is in one mind, and who can turn Him?" Not want of power, for He is omnipotent: not want of foresight, for He is omniscient: not the opinion of any other being, "for who hath known the mind of the Lord and who hath been His counsellor?" If it is admitted, then, that God has present purposes, it must be admitted that He has eternal purposes. But God has present purposes. If any one doubts this the proof is at hand. The "determination of God," "His counsel," "His will," "His purpose," are phrases which, as every reader of the Bible knows, occur almost constantly in the sacred pages. What language could be more explicit than the following? "For every purpose of the Lord shall stand." "Who hath called us according to His own purpose and grace." "According to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." This point besides is too evident to require elaborate proof. Did God create the universe? Does he uphold it and govern it? Can any man persuade himself that all this is done without design? Do the works of creation around us—do our own bodies and minds bear no marks of intelligence—of purpose in the Creator? No man can suppose this, without denying the evidence of his own senses, and degrading the infinite God below His rational offspring: because His rational offspring do not act without purpose.

Two things then are certain: first, that God is unchangeable; secondly, that God has purposes. The inference is perfectly conclusive that these purposes are eternal. This argument cannot be evaded. It has the clearness of demonstration.—*E. Porter, D.D.*

4 To all His other attributes.

[10938] It is not a single perfection of the Divine nature, nor is it limited to particular objects thus and thus disposed. Mercy and justice have their distinct objects and distinct acts; mercy is conversant about a penitent, justice conversant about an obstinate, sinner. In our notion and conception of the Divine perfections, His perfections are different; the wisdom of God is not His power, nor His power His holiness, but immutability is the centre wherein they all unite. There is not one perfection but may be said to be, and truly is, immutable; none of them will appear so glorious without this beam, the sun of immutability, which renders them highly excellent without the least shadow of imperfection. How cloudy would His blessedness be if it were changeable; how dim His wisdom if it might be obscured; how feeble His power if it were capable to be sickly and languish; how would mercy lose much of its lustre if it could change into wrath, and justice much of its dread if it could be turned into mercy, while the object of justice remains unfit for mercy, and one that hath need of mercy continues only fit for the Divine fury? But unchangeableness is a thread that runs through the whole web, it is the enamel of all the rest; none of them without it could look with a triumphant aspect. His power is unchangeable (Isa. xxvi. 4): "In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." His mercy and His holiness endure for ever. He never could, nor ever can, look upon iniquity (Hab. i. 13), He is a rock in the righteousness of His ways, the truth of His word, the holiness of His proceedings, and the rectitude of His nature. All are expressed: Deut. xxxii. 4, "He is a rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are judgment; a God of truth and without inquity, just and right He is." All that we consider in God is unchangeable, for His essence and His properties are the same, and therefore what is necessarily belonging to the essence of God belongs also to every perfection of the nature of God; none of them can receive any addition or diminution. From the unchangeableness of His nature the Apostle James (chap. i. 17) infers the unchangeableness of His holiness, and himself, in Mal. iii. 6, the unchangeableness of his counsel.—*Charnock.*

II. Import of the Original Inculcation of this Doctrine.

1 The unchangeableness of God was taught originally, as contrasted with poetical and mythical theology.

[10939] Theologists of antiquity were accustomed to weave just such fancies as they pleased, and twine them about an imaginary God, changing to-day the imaginings of yesterday, as one

twines every day fresh flowers about some statue. Without revelation, without even the fixed data which science affords, men formed ideal images and called them God. There was perpetual change. Nothing was established ; nothing was veritable beyond dispute. All human conceptions of God were in the shimmering light of ever-shifting imaginations. As opposed to such a view of God, a creature of fancy, that changed with all the moods of the imagination, God was declared to be unchangeable.—*Beecher.*

2 **The unchangeableness of God was taught originally as opposed to the caprice of heathen divinities.**

[10940] Heathen gods were but little better than deified despots, holding supremacy for the sake of indulging in all those lusts and appetites in which Oriental monarchs indulged. The gods of antiquity were shameful, subject to fits of wrath, and to the most fitful changes of the most desperate feelings. As opposed to one whose anger was ever to be feared ; who was to be placated by blood ; whose caprices were such as to keep the devotee in perpetual awe—as opposed to such a one, the Bible revealed Jehovah, the unchangeable ; who, being once known, was for ever to be obeyed, because His commands were equitable and right, and from whom such as learned His will, and followed the path of obedience, had nothing to fear, but everything to hope.

All our ideas of God must spring from something that is in our own mind. The heathen gods were framed from the suggestions of the appetites, of the passions, of the imagination, and of the intellectual powers, while the Hebrew Scriptures, from the very earliest day, presented to the world the conception of a God framed from the inspiration of the highest moral sentiments. The gods of all the world beside were but deified passions, at the best nothing more than gods of ideality and the intellectual powers, while from the beginning the Jehovah of the Scriptures has represented the most sublime elements of our being.

The gods of heathen nations made war with each other, maintaining themselves by the exertion of force against other gods, so that there were revulsions in high and heavenly places, and reigning dynasties were overthrown. As opposed to such a conception as this, the Bible teaches God to be one, from eternity and to eternity, sovereign and immutable—*Ibid.*

III. The Lessons to be derived from a Right Conception of Divine Immutability.

1 **It will teach us patience under such providences as declare God's unchangeable will.**

[10941] The rectitude of our wills consists in conformity to the Divine, as discovered in His words and manifested in His providence, which are the effluxes of His immutable will. The time of trial is appointed by His immutable will (Dan. xi. 35) ; it is not in the power of the sufferer's will to shorten it, nor in the power of the enemy's will to lengthen it. Whatsoever doth happen hath been decreed by God : Eccles. vi. 10, "That which hath been is named already ;" therefore to murmur, or be discontented, is to contend with God, who is mightier than we to maintain His own purposes. God doth act all things conveniently for that immutable end intended by Himself, and according to the reason of His own Divine will, in the true point of time most proper for it and for us, not too soon or too slow, because He is unchangeable in knowledge and wisdom. God doth not act anything barely by an immutable will, but by an immutable wisdom and an unchangeable rule of goodness ; and therefore we should not only acquiesce in what He works, but have a complacency in it ; and by having our wills thus knitting themselves with the immutable will of God, we attain some degree of likeness to Him in His own unchangeableness. When, therefore, God hath manifested His will in opening His decree to the world by His work of providence, we must cease all disputes against it, and with Aaron hold our peace, though the affliction be very smart (Lev. x. 3) : "All flesh must be silent, before God" (Zech. ii. 13) ; for whatsoever is His counsel shall stand. —*Charnock.*

2 **It will teach us to imitate God in His perfection, by striving to be unmovable in goodness.**

[10942] God never goes back from Himself ; He finds nothing better than Himself for which He should change ; and can we find anything better than God, to allure our hearts to a change from Him ? The sun never declines from the ecliptic line, nor should we from the paths of holiness. A steadfast obedience is encouraged by an unchangeable God to reward it : 1 Cor. xv. 58, "Be stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." Unsteadfastness is the note of a hypocrite, Psa. lxxviii. 37 ; steadfastness in that which is good is the mark of a saint ; it is the character of a righteous person to "keep the truth" (Isa. xxvi. 2) ; and it is as positively said that "he that abides not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God" (2 John 9) : but he that doth, "hath both the Father and the Son." So much of uncertainty, so much of nature ; so much of firmness in duty, so much of grace. We can never honour God unless we finish His work, as Christ did not glorify God but in "finishing the work God gave Him to do" (John xvii. 4). The nearer the world comes to an end, the more is God's immutability seen in His promises and predictions, and the more must our unchangeableness be seen in our obedience : Heb. x. 23, 25, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, and so much the more as you see the day approaching." The Christian Jews were to be the more tenacious of their faith the nearer they saw the day

approaching, the day of Jerusalem's destruction prophesied of by Daniel (chap. ix. 26); which accomplishment must be a great argument to establish the Christian Jews in the profession of Christ to be the Messiah, because the destruction of the city was not to be before the cutting off the Messiah. Let us be therefore constant in our profession and service of God, and not suffer ourselves to be driven from Him by the ill usage, or flattered from him by the caresses of the world.—*Ibid.*

3 It will teach us to feel perfect confidence in His controlling government.

[10943] Comforting doctrine it undoubtedly is. It leads us, among other reflections, to feel assured of His certain foreknowledge of all events. That whatever can befall us must be His ordination; and that the fitful changes in a changing world—our relations to one another, our domestic and social ties, our joys and our sorrows, are ordained, watched, controlled by Him who sitteth enthroned alike amid the radiant sunshine and above and behind the cloudlands of life; bringing good out of seeming evil, order out of apparent confusion; overruling all (ALL), for His own glory and for the best interests of His Church.—*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*

4 It will teach us to realize the consolation of His sure promises.

[10944] The immutability of Jehovah gives stability to His purposes and certainty to His promises. His word cannot fail, because His nature cannot change. His covenant rests on this sure foundation, therefore "the counsel of the Lord shall stand, and he will do all His pleasure." "He is not a man that he should lie, nor the Son of Man that he should repent." Though "all flesh is grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field," "the word of the Lord endureth for ever." Those who trust in Him shall never be disappointed. Those who confide in His protection shall never be endangered. Those who seek their consolation and happiness in His favour shall never be repulsed. They tread upon a rock of adamant; they drink from an exhaustless fountain; and they are secure though nature sink in ruin.—*Wm. Cooke, D.D.*

IV. Arguments to meet some Apparent Contrarieties concerning the Unchangeableness of God.

1 There was no change in God when He began to create one world in time.

(1) *Because there was neither new will nor new power in God.*

[10945] When the time of creating came, God was not made *ex nolente volens*, as we are; for whatsoever God willed to be now done, He willed from eternity to be done; but He willed also that it should not be done till such an instant of time, and that it should not exist before such a time. If God had willed the creation of the world only at that time when the world was produced, and not before, then, indeed, God had been changeable. But though God spake that word which He had not spoken before, whereby the world was brought into act, yet He did not will that will He willed not before. God did not create by a new counsel or new will, but by that which was from eternity (Eph. i. 9). All things are wrought according to that "purpose in Himself," and "according to the counsel of His will" (ver. 11); and as the holiness of the elect is the fruit of His eternal will "before the foundation of the world" (ver. 4), so likewise is the existence of things and of these persons whom He did elect. Had God had a will at the time of the creation which He had not before, there had been a moral change in Him; so had there been in Him a power only to create then and not before, there had been a physical change in Him from weakness to ability. There can be no more new power in God than there can be a new will in God; for His will is His power, and what He willeth to effect that He doth effect. As He was unchangeably holy, so he was unchangeably almighty, "which was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. iv. 8); which was almighty, and is almighty, and ever will be almighty. The work, therefore, makes no change in God, but there is a change in the thing wrought by that power of God.—*Charnock.*

2 There was no change in the Divine nature of the Son when He assumed human nature.

[10946] There was an union of the two natures, but no change of the Deity into the humanity, or of the humanity into the Deity; both preserved their peculiar properties. The humanity was changed by a communication of excellent gifts from the Divine nature, not by being brought into an equality with it. He could not have been a sufficient mediator had He ceased to be God, and He had ceased to be God had He lost any one perfection proper to the Divine nature; and losing none, He lost not this of unchangeableness, which is none of the meanest belonging to the Deity. Why, by His union with the human nature, should He lose this any more than He lost His omniscience, which He discovered by His knowledge of the thoughts of men; or His mercy, which He manifested to the height in the time of His suffering? That is truly a change when a thing ceaseth to be what it was before. This was not in Christ. He assumed our nature without laying aside His own. When the soul is united to the body, doth it lose any of those perfections that are proper to its nature? Is there any change either in the substance or qualities of it. No; but it makes a change in the body; and of a dull lump it makes it a living mass, conveys vigour and strength to it, and by its power quickens it to sense and motion. So did the Divine nature and human remain entire, there was no change of

the one into the other, as Christ by a miracle changed water into wine, or men by art change sand or ashes into glass.—*Ibid.*

3 Repentance and other affections ascribed to God in Scripture argue no change in Him.

(1) *Repentance in God is only a change of His outward conduct according to His infallible foresight and immutable will.*

[10947] We often read of God's repenting, repenting of the good he promised (Jer. xviii. 10), and of the evil he threatened (Exod. xxvii. 14), or of the work he hath wrought (Gen. vi. 6); but repentance is not properly in God. He is a pure Spirit, and is not capable of those passions which are signs of weakness and impotency, or subject to those regrets we are subject to. Where there is a proper repentance, there is a want of foresight, an ignorance of what would succeed, or a defect in the examination of the occurrences which might fall within consideration. He changes the way of His providential proceeding according to the carriage of the creature, without changing His will, which is the rule of His providence. When God speaks of His repenting that He had made man (Gen. vi. 6), it is only His changing His conduct from a way of kindness to a way of severity, and is a word suited to our capacities to signify His detestation of sin and His resolution to punish it, after man had made himself quite another thing than God had made him. "It repents Me;" that is, I am purposed to destroy the world, as he that repents of his work throws it away; as if a potter cast away the vessel he had framed, it were a testimony that he repented that ever he took pains about it; so the destruction of them seems to be a repentance in God that ever He made them, it is a change of events, not of counsels. Repentance in us is a grief for a former fact, and a changing of our course in it. Grief is not in God, but His repentance is a willing a thing should not be as it was, which will was fixed from eternity; for God, foreseeing man would fall, and decreeing to permit it, He could not be said to repent in time of what He did not repent from eternity; and, therefore, if there were no repentance in God from eternity, there could be none in time.—*Ibid.*

4 Divine immutability is perfectly consistent with the exercise of dispositions and affections.

[10948] All intelligent beings have dispositions and affections, and though some of these, such as fear, sorrow, sadness, and the like, are evidences of an inferior and dependent nature, and cannot exist in God, yet others, such as love, complacency, delight, &c., are evidences of a superior nature, and do dwell in the mind of the Deity. It is, indeed, within the scope of these affections that all the moral excellences of our nature are evolved, and without them, however intellectual a man might become, he could exhibit no moral excellences. In fact, in a state of total apathy, we do not see how he could be a moral agent. As God cannot contradict Himself, His works must agree with His nature. The acts of power are directed by wisdom, and both wisdom and power accomplish the purposes of goodness; and the purposes of goodness harmonize with the dictates of truth and justice. However multiplied and diversified the operations of Deity, no attribute of His nature is ever enfringed thereby.—*Wm. Cooke, D.D.*

5 Divine immutability does not of necessity involve absolute uniformity of action and principle.

[10949] His purposes are stable, for they were laid by unerring Wisdom: and His nature and character are unchangeable, though His operations are diversified. If a righteous man fall from the Divine favour, it is because the man himself has changed in his character by sin; and if a wicked man rise into the Divine love, it is because he becomes changed by repentance. God may deal with nations as He does with individuals. The Jews may be cut off from the olive, and the Gentiles be grafted in; the light of truth may expire in Eastern churches, and Western nations, which sat in darkness, may emerge into the day-spring of gospel privileges. But in all these events the change is in man, not in God: the one has rejected privileges, and they are withdrawn; the other has improved them, and they are increased. The fact that when men change in their character they change also in their relation to God, is a further proof of God's immutability. It is because His law, His love of holiness, and the principles of His government are unchangeable, that the repentant are accepted and the impenitent rejected —that the righteous are approved, and the wicked are cast out. As the sun shines at midnight with equal brightness, though we are then involved in darkness; and as His beams are diffused with the same genial and vivifying power in winter, though we shiver with cold, and our hemisphere is covered with barrenness and desolation, so God is the same in His nature, perfections, and laws, though our conduct may change our condition from happiness to misery, from favour to condemnation.—*Ibid.*

V. THE PECULIAR MAJESTY OF THIS ATTRIBUTE.

[10950] With what glory does immutability invest the Creator, and in what sublime and awe-inspiring contrast does He stand with respect to the most durable existence and the most exalted nature among His creatures! Compared with His eternity, the universe is young; and compared with His immutability, it is unstable and evanescent. From His exalted throne He beholds the longest series of events which the heavens have chronicled come on and depart, and their duration is "but as a watch in the night." The most protracted dynasties

rise and fall, and their existence is but as an hour. Suns are lighted up, systems are formed, and He sees them wane and expire—He beholds their vast cycles run out as we see the changing phases of the moon. He has seen the ethereal spirits nearest His eternal throne—pure and refulgent with the reflection of his own image—rise from the dawn of infantine intelligence and excellence, and, through countless ages, advance in intellectual vigour and moral elevation to their present dignified estate. He envies not, but rejoices in their attainments, satisfied and pleased that they answer the end of their being; yet he changes not. He shifts not His throne higher because of their exaltation; He expands not His powers because of their progression; He brightens not His perfections because of their augmenting glory. The excellences of His intellectual and moral nature will for ever leave the most exalted seraph at an infinite distance from Himself.—*Wm. Cooke, D.D.*

8

PERFECTION.

I. The Necessity of Perfection to Divine Independence.

[10951] Wollaston argues, that if two or more independent beings exist, their natures must be the same or different; if different, either contrary or various. If contrary, each must destroy the operations of the other; if various, one must have what the other wants, and both cannot be perfect. If their nature be perfectly the same, then they would coincide, and indeed be but one, though called two. If God be an infinitely perfect Being, it is impossible to imagine two such beings at the same time, because they must have several perfections, or the same. If the former, neither of them can be God, because neither of them has all possible perfections. If they have both equal perfections, neither of them can be absolutely perfect, because it is not so great to have the same equal perfections in common with another as to be superior to all others.—*Bp. Wilkins.*

[10952] To such a being infinity may be justly ascribed; and infinity, not extrinsically considered with respect to time and place, but intrinsically, as imparting bottomless profundity of essence, and the full confluence of all kinds and degrees of perfection without bound or limit, and yet for those to be more independent. —*Howe.*

[10953] Limitation is the effect of some superior cause, which, in the present instance, there cannot be; consequently, to suppose limits where there can be no limiter, is to suppose an effect without a cause. For a being to be limited or deficient in any respect, is to be dependent in that respect on some other being which gave it just so much and no more; consequently, that being which in no respect depends upon any other, is in no respect limited or deficient. In all beings capable of increase or diminution, and, consequently, incapable of perfection or absolute infinity, limitation or defect is indeed a necessary consequence of existence, and is only a negation of that perfection which is wholly incompatible with their nature; and therefore in these beings it requires no further cause. But in a being naturally capable of perfection or absolute infinity, all imperfection or finiteness, as it cannot flow from the nature of that being, seems to require some ground or reason; which reason, as it is foreign from the being itself, must be the effect of some other external cause, and consequently cannot have place in the first cause. That the self-existent Being is capable of perfection or absolute infinity, must be granted, because He is manifestly the subject of one infinite or perfect attribute, namely, eternity or absolute invariable existence. In this respect His existence is perfect; and therefore it may be perfect in every other respect also. Now that which is the subject of one infinite attribute or perfection, must have all its attributes infinitely or in perfection.—*Rev. Richard Watson.*

[10954] By absolute perfection we mean that the Divine nature is absolutely without defect, and possesses intrinsically every possible excellence, in infinite measure and degree. Such perfection of nature is necessarily involved in His self-existence and eternity. Limitation implies defect, and defect and limitation result from dependence. Thus, every creature is limited, because it is dependent and subject to the will of the Creator, who has given to each only a finite capacity, and a finite measure of any good which it may possess. The capacity may be filled, but it is limited. No such cause, of limitation, however, is applicable to the Divine nature, for He is uncaused. He receives neither His existence nor His capacity from another, but, as already proved, is self-existent and eternal. It is, therefore, irrational to ascribe limitation to Him, for it is to suppose an effect without a cause—an effect where it is impossible there could be any effect. Existing from all eternity, there was no extraneous cause to limit or fix bounds to any of His glorious perfections, nor could there be any intrinsic cause to produce that result, for every nature delights in its own perfection. Eternity of existence is itself an infinite perfection, and implies, in an intelligent nature, the actual and eternal possession of every other perfection. In such a being it is impossible to conceive the existence of defect, and this impossibility involves an intellectual necessity of supposing, on the contrary, the actual existence of every element of perfection, and that in boundless measure and degree. A conscious, intelligent, personal being, who is self-existent and eternal, must possess absolute perfection.—*William Cooke, D.D.*

II. The Display of God's Perfection.

1 In His creative works.

[10955] What an immense workman is God! in miniature as well as in the great. With the one hand, perhaps, He is making a ring of one hundred thousand miles in diameter, to revolve round a planet like Saturn, and with the other is forming a tooth in the ray of the feather of a humming-bird, or a point in the claw of the foot of a microscopic insect. When He works in miniature, every thing is gilded, polished, and perfect, but whatever is made by human art, as a needle, &c., when viewed by a microscope, appears rough, and coarse, and bungling.—*Bp. Law.*

[10956] God never made his work for man to mend.—*Dryden.*

9

HOLINESS.

I. The Peculiar Glory of this Attribute.

[10957] Holiness is a glorious perfection belonging to the nature of God. Hence He is in Scripture styled often the Holy One, the Holy One of Jacob, the Holy One of Israel; and oftener entitled holy than almighty, and set forth by this part of His dignity more than by any other. This is more affixed as an epithet to His name than any other: you never find it expressed, His mighty name, or His wise name; but His great name, and most of all, His holy name. This is the greatest title of honour, in this doth the majesty and venerableness of His name appear. When the sinfulness of Sennacherib is aggravated, the Holy Ghost takes the rise from this attribute: Thou hast "lifted up thine eyes on high, even against the Holy One of Israel," 2 Kings xix. 22; not against the wise, mighty, &c., but against the Holy One of Israel, as that wherein the majesty of God was most illustrious. It is upon this account He is called light, as impurity is called darkness; both in this sense are opposed to one another: He is a pure and unmixed light, free from all blemish in His essence, nature, and operations. —*Charnock.*

[10958] There are some attributes of God we prefer because of our interest in them, and the relation they bear to us: as we esteem His goodness before His power; and His mercy whereby He relieves us, before His justice whereby He punisheth us. As there are some we more delight in, because of the goodness we receive by them; so there are some that God delights to honour, because of their excellency. None is sounded out so loftily with such solemnity, and so frequently by angels that stand before His throne, as this. Where do you find any other attribute trebled in the praises of it, as this? "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isa. vi. 3); and, "The four beasts rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty" (Rev. iv. 8). His power or sovereignty, as Lord of hosts, is but once mentioned; but with a threefold repetition of His holiness. Do you hear in any angelical song any other perfection of the Divine nature thrice repeated? Where do we read of the crying out, Eternal, eternal, eternal; or, Faithful, faithful, faithful, Lord God of hosts? Whatsoever other attribute is left out, this God would have to fill the mouths of angels and blessed spirits for ever in heaven. Again, he singles it out to swear by. "Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David" (Psa. lxxxix. 35); and, "The Lord God hath sworn by His holiness" (Amos iv. 2). He twice swears by His holiness; once by His power (Isa. lxii. 8); once by all, when He swears by His name (Jer. xliv. 26). He lays here His holiness to pledge for the assurance of His promise, as the attribute most dear to Him, most valued by Him, as though no other could give an assurance parallel to it in this concern of an everlasting redemption which is there spoken of. He that swears, swears by a greater than himself; God having no greater than Himself, swears by Himself: and swearing here by His holiness, seems to equal that single one to all His other attributes.—*Ibid.*

II. Its Necessity to the Divine Nature.

[10959] It is the essential glory of His nature: His holiness is as necessary as His being, as necessary as His omniscience; as He cannot but know what is right, so He cannot but do what is just. His understanding is not as created understandings, capable of ignorance as well as knowledge; so His will is not as created wills, capable of unrighteousness as well as righteousness. There can be no contradiction or contrariety in the Divine nature, to know what is right, and to do what is wrong: if so there would be a diminution of His blessedness, He would not be a God always blessed, blessed for ever, as He is (Rom. ix. 5). He is as necessarily holy as He is necessarily God; as necessarily without sin as without change. As He was God from eternity, so He was holy from eternity. He was gracious, merciful, just in His own nature, and also holy, though no creature had been framed by Him to exercise His grace, mercy, justice, or holiness upon. If God had not created a world, He had in His own nature been Almighty, and able to create a world. If there never had been any thing but Himself, yet He had been omniscient, knowing everything that was within the verge and compass of His infinite power; so He was pure in His own nature, though He never had brought forth any rational creature whereby to manifest this purity. These perfections are so necessary that the nature of God could not

subsist without them. And the acts of those *ad intra*, or within Himself, are necessary; for being omniscient in nature, there must be an act of knowledge of Himself and His own nature. Being infinitely holy, an act of holiness in infinitely loving Himself must necessarily flow from this perfection. As the Divine will cannot but be perfect, so it cannot be wanting to render the highest love to itself, to its goodness, to the Divine nature, which is due to Him. Indeed, the acts of those *ad extra* are not necessary, but upon a condition. To love righteousness without himself, or to detest sin, or inflict punishment for the committing of it, could not have been, had there been no righteous creature for Him to love, no sinning creature for Him to loathe, and to exercise His justice upon, as the object of punishment.—*Charnock.*

III. Its Relation to Divine Love.

[10960] Divine love and Divine holiness have often been represented as antagonist principles; and yet truly are not so, though there are conceivable and actual circumstances in which their separate action might seem to tend in opposite ways. In themselves they are conspiring and not conflicting principles. When Divine love is exercised, it has the approbation of Divine holiness; and Divine holiness is exercised in honouring and guarding Divine love. God is love, is in His very will and affections love, and is led by His very nature to approve of that love which is in His very essence.

Let it be observed, however, that holiness is something more than the mere love of promoting happiness. It is not so much the love of promoting happiness as the love of that pure love which seeks the promotion of happiness. This attribute, in one sense, is inferior to love, because its proper exercise consists in approving of love, and in guiding love. In another sense, it is the highest attribute in the Divine nature, higher than benevolence itself, for it sits in judgment upon benevolence, which it proclaims to be supremely and ineffably good, and regulates and directs that benevolence. Let us look up with equal admiration to both, as constituting the two polar forces of the moral universe, the two essential elements of the moral character of God.—*McCosh, D.D.*

IV. Its Character and Properties.

1 It is absolute and superlative.

[10961] "There is none holy as the Lord" (1 Sam. ii. 2). It is the peculiar glory of His nature. As there is none good but God, so none holy but God. No creature can be essentially holy, because mutable: holiness is the substance of God, but a quality and accident in a creature. God is infinitely holy, creatures finitely holy. He is holy from Himself, creatures are holy by derivation from Him. He is not only holy, but holiness; holiness, in the highest degree, is His sole prerogative. As the highest heaven is called the heaven of heavens, because it embraceth in its circle all the heavens, and contains the magnitude of them, and hath a greater vastness above all that it encloseth. "The heavens are not clean in His sight" (Job xv. 15); "and His angels He charged with folly" (Job iv. 18). Though God hath crowned the angels with an unspotted sanctity, and placed them in a habitation of glory; yet, as illustrious as they are, they have an unworthiness in their own nature to appear before the throne of so holy a God; their holiness grows dim and pale in His presence. It is but a weak shadow of that Divine purity, whose light is so glorious, that it makes them cover their faces out of weakness to behold it, and cover their feet out of shame in themselves. They are not pure in His sight, because though they love God (which is a principle of holiness) as much as they can, yet not so much as He deserves; they love Him with the intensest degree according to their power, but not with the intensest degree according to His own amiableness: for they cannot infinitely love God, unless they were as infinite as God, and had an understanding of His perfections equal with Himself, and as immense as His own knowledge. God having an infinite knowledge of Himself, can alone have an infinite love to Himself, and consequently an infinite holiness without any defect; because He loves Himself according to the vastness of His own amiableness, which no finite being can. Therefore, though the angels be exempt from corruption and soil, they cannot enter into comparison with the purity of God.—*Charnock.*

2 It is humanly incomprehensible.

[10962] Of course it is not asserted that our understanding of the perfect holiness of the infinite God is, or can be, other than very imperfect and inadequate. God's holiness no doubt infinitely transcends our conceptions, but it does not therefore contradict them: and to say that principles which would be unholy in the finite sphere of earth can be holy in the infinite sphere of heaven, is the same kind of absurdity as to say that it is possible for lines which are parallel in finite space to meet or to diverge in infinite space. We have a right to affirm that the principles of moral law are valid for all beings, infinite as well as finite, who have intelligence enough to understand them.—*J. J. Murphy.*

V. Its Reflection in Man.

1 Our mental and moral sentiments and emotions are expressive of the Creator's holiness.

[10963] How is it that man is formed with a faculty for determining the quality of moral actions? How is it that he approves and justifies the good, and condemns the wicked? How is it that his mental determinations on all moral subjects are associated with moral sensibilities? How is it that complacency and satisfaction are uniformly united with a conscious-

ness of good dispositions and actions, and remorse and anguish are associated with evil dispositions and actions? How is it, finally, that even the malign passions themselves cannot be justified when exercised towards a being confessed to be good, and that we are compelled, at least, to imagine a being to be evil ere we can justify our hatred towards him? Why are the malign passions themselves thus compelled to do homage to virtue and goodness? It is not sufficient to reply, such is the constitution of the human mind. It is possible to suppose man might have had a different constitution, and therefore, there must be a reason for giving him *this* constitution. It is not sufficient to say that God thus made man because it was His will, for still the question returns—Why is it God's will? The only philosophical reply is—Because it expresses God's nature; and if such be His nature, then He is a righteous and holy Being. Throughout the wide universe of mind, the Creator has left the brand of His aversion upon all evil dispositions and actions, by rendering them so many sources of uneasiness and misery; and has impressed the seal of His approval upon every good disposition and action, by rendering such productive of satisfaction and happiness; and thus has He published to all intelligent beings the great truth, that their Creator is a Being of absolute rectitude, of essential and unchanging holiness.—*Wm. Cooke, D.D.*

[10964] Holiness is the chiefest excellency of man, his highest advantage above inferior beings. It is the supreme beauty of the soul, the resemblance of angels, the image of God Himself. In this the perfection of the reasonable nature truly consists, and glory naturally results from it. As a diamond, when its earthy and colourless parts are taken away, shines forth in its lustre; so when the soul is freed from its impurities and all terrene affections, it will appear with a divine brightness. The church shall then be glorious, when cleansed from every spot and made complete in holiness.—*Wm. Bates, D.D.*

[10965] This is the excellency and beauty of a creature. The title of beauty is given to it in Psa. cx. 3; "beauties," in the plural number, as comprehending in it all other beauties whatsoever. What is a Divine excellency cannot be a creature's deformity: the natural beauty of it is a representation of the divinity; and a holy man ought to esteem himself excellent, it being such in his measure as his God is, and puts his principal felicity in the possession of the same purity in truth. This is the refined complexion of the angels that stand before His throne. The devils lost their comeliness when they fell from it. It was the honour of the human nature of our Saviour, not only to be united to the Deity, but to be sanctified by it. He was fairer than all the children of men, because He had a holiness above the children of men: grace was poured into His lips (Psa. xlv. 2). It was the jewel of the reasonable nature in paradise: conformity to God was man's original happiness in his created state, and what was naturally so cannot but be immutably so in its own nature. The beauty of every copied thing consists in its likeness to the original: everything hath more of loveliness as it hath greater impressions of its first pattern. In this regard holiness hath more of beauty on it than the whole creation, because it partakes of a greater excellency of God than the sun, moon, and stars. No greater glory can be, than to be a conspicuous and visible image of the invisible and holy and blessed God. As this is the splendour of all the Divine attributes, so it is the flower of all a Christian's graces, the crown of all religion: it is the glory of the spirit. In this regard the king's daughter is said to be all glorious within (Psa. xlv. 13). It is more excellent than the soul itself, since the greatest soul is but a deformed piece without it (a diamond without lustre). What are the noble faculties of the soul without it, but as a curious rusty watch, a delicate heap of disorder and confusion? It is impossible there can be beauty where there are a multitude of spots and wrinkles that blemish a countenance (Eph. v. 27). It can never be in its true brightness but when it is perfect in purity, when it regains what it was possessed of by creation, and dispossessed of by the fall, and recovers its primitive temper. We are not so beautiful by being the work of God as by having a stamp of God upon us.—*Charnock.*

[10966] If we would discover the justice and holiness of God, and the qualities which distinguish the righteous and benevolent Governor, we must look to the bearing of His works and dispensations on the state and character of man. —*McCosh, D.D.*

[10967] Holiness is conformity to the character of God. To have fellowship with Him in His characteristic feelings and principles; to love what He loves; to hate what He hates; to desire what He promises; to rejoice in His will in all things, even when it crosses our own will; to learn to say from the bottom of the heart, even in the agony of conflict, "Not my will, but Thine be done;" this is to be holy: and every nearer approach to this is an advance in holiness.—*Rev. Sir E. Bayley, B.D.*

VI. Means whereby this Divine Attribute may be slighted.

1 It may be slighted in unworthy representations of God, and imaginations of Him in our own minds.

[10968] It is too common for men to fancy God not as He is, but as they would have Him; strip Him of His excellency for their own security. As God made man after His image, man would dress God after his own modes, as may best suit the content of his lusts, and encourage him in a course of sinning. For when they can frame such a notion of God, as if He were a countenancer of sin, they will derive from thence a reputation to their crimes, commit

wickedness with an unbounded licentiousness, and crown their vices with the name of virtues, because they are so like to the sentiments of that God they fancy. From hence, as the Psalmist says in the psalm before mentioned, ariseth that mass of vice in the world; such conceptions are the mother and nurse of all impiety; I question not but the first spring is some wrong notion of God in regard of His holiness. We are as apt to imagine God as we would have Him as the black Ethiopians were to draw the image of their gods after their own dark hue, and paint him with their own colour: as a philosopher in Theodoret speaks, if oxen and lions had hands, and could paint as men do, they would frame the images of their gods according to their own likeness and complexion. Such notions of God render Him worse than the vilest idols adored by the Egyptians, when men fancy a God indulgent to their appetites and most sordid lusts.—*Charnock.*

VII. Heathen and Heretical Testimonies to the Holiness of God.

[10969] Heathens have owned it. Proclus calls Him the undefiled Governor of the world. The poetical transformations of their false gods, and the extravagances committed by them, were (in the account of the wisest of them) an unholy thing to report and hear. And some vindicate Epicurus from the atheism wherewith he was commonly charged; that he did not deny the being of God, but those adulterous and contentious deities the people worshipped, which were practices unworthy and unbecoming the nature of God. Hence they asserted, that virtue was an imitation of God, and a virtuous man bore a resemblance of God: if virtue were a copy from God, a greater holiness must be owned in the original. And when some of them were at a loss how to free God from being the author of sin in the world, they ascribe the birth of sin to matter, and run into an absurd opinion, fancying it to be uncreated, that thereby they might exempt God from all mixture of evil; so sacred with them was the conception of God as a holy God.

Again, the absurdest heretics have owned it. The Manichees and Marcionites, that thought evil came by necessity, yet would save God's being the author of it, by asserting two distinct eternal principles, one the original of evil, as God was the fountain of good. So rooted was the notion of this Divine purity. that none would ever slander goodness itself with that which was so disparaging to it.—*Ibid.*

10

SOVEREIGNTY.

I. Nature of the Divine Sovereignty.

1 It is independent and absolute.

[10970] His throne is in the heavens; the heavens depend not upon the earth, nor God upon His creatures. Since He is independent in regard to His essence, He is so in His dominion, which flows from the excellency and fulness of His essence. As He receives His essence from none, so He receives His dominion from none. All other dominion except paternal authority is rooted originally in the wills of men. The first title was the consent of the people, or the conquest of others by the help of those people that first consented. And in the exercise of it, earthly dominion depends upon assistance of the subjects, and the members being joined with the head carry on the work of government, and prevent civil dissensions; in the support of it, it depends upon the subject's contributions and taxes. The subjects in their strength are the arms, and in their purses the sinews of government. But God depends upon none in the foundation of His government; He is not a Lord by the votes of His vassals. Nor is it successively handed to Him by any predecessor, nor constituted by the power of a superior. Nor forced He His way by war and conquest, nor precariously obtained it by suit or flattery, or bribing promises. He holds not the right of His empire from any other; He hath no superior to hand Him to His throne, and settle Him by commission. He is therefore called King of kings, and Lord of lords, having none above Him: "A great King above all gods" (Psa. xcv. 3); needing no license from any when to act, nor direction how to act, or assistance in His action: He owes not any of those to any person; He was not ordered by any other to create, and therefore receives not orders from any other to rule over what He hath created. He received not His power and wisdom from another, and therefore is not subject to any for the rule of His government. He only made His own subjects, and from Himself hath the sole authority; His own will was the cause of their being, and His own will is the director of their actions. He is not determined by His creatures in any of His motions, but determines the creatures in all. His actions are not regulated by any law without Him, but by a law within Him, the law of His own nature. It is impossible He can have any rule without Himself; because there is nothing superior to Himself.—*Charnock.*

II. Special Characteristics of the Divine Sovereignty.

1 It is marked by ineffable wisdom.

[10971] What may appear to us to have no other spring than absolute sovereignty, would be found to have a depth of amazing wisdom and unaccountable reason were our short capacities long enough to fathom it. When the apostle had been discoursing of the eternal counsels of God, in seizing upon one man and letting go another, in rejecting the Jews and gathering in the Gentiles, which appear to us to be results of an absolute dominion, yet he resolves not those amazing acts into that, with-

out taking it for granted that they were governed by exact wisdom, though beyond his ken to see and his line to sound. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. xi. 33.) There are some things in matters of state that may seem to be acts of mere will, but if we were acquainted with the *arcana imperii*, the inward engines which moved them, and the ends aimed at in those undertakings, we might find a rich vein of prudence in them, to incline us to judge them otherwise than bare arbitrary proceedings. The other attributes of power and goodness are more easily perceptible in the works of God than His wisdom. The first view of the creation strikes us with this sentiment, that the Author of this great fabric was mighty and beneficial; but His wisdom lies deeper than to be discerned at the first glance without a diligent inquiry: as at the first casting our eyes upon the sea, we beheld its motion, colour, and something of its vastness, but we cannot presently fathom the depth of it, and understand those lower fountains that supply that great ocean of waters. It is part of God's sovereignty, as it is of the wisest princes, that He hath a wisdom beyond the reach of His subjects: it is not for a finite nature to understand an infinite wisdom, nor for a foolish creature that hath lost his understanding by the fall to judge of the reason of the methods of a wise counsellor.—*Ibid.*

2 It is displayed in transcendent graciousness.

[10972] As God's throne is a throne of holiness, so it is a throne of grace (Heb. iv. 16). A throne encircled with a rainbow, "in sight like unto an emerald" (Rev. iv. 3); an emblem of the covenant, that hath the pleasantness of a green colour, delightful to the eye, betokening mercy. Though His nature be infinitely excellent above us, and His power infinitely transcendent over us, yet the majesty of His government is tempered with an unspeakable goodness. He acts not so much as an absolute Lord as a gracious Sovereign and obliging Benefactor. He delights not to make His subjects slaves; exacts not of them any servile and fearful, but a generous and cheerful obedience. He requires them not to fear or worship Him so much for His power as His goodness. He requires not of a rational creature any thing repugnant to the honour, dignity, and principles of such a nature; not anything that may shame, disgrace it, and make it weary of its own being, or of the service it owes to its Sovereign. He draws by the cords of a man; His goodness renders His laws as sweet as honey or the honeycomb to an unvitiated palate and a renewed mind. And though it be granted He hath a full disposal of His creature, as the potter of his vessel, and might by His absolute sovereignty inflict upon an innocent an eternal torment, yet His goodness will never permit Him to use this sovereign right to the hurt of a creature that deserves it not. If God should cast an innocent creature into the furnace of His wrath, who can question Him? But who can think that His goodness will do so, since that is as infinite as His authority? As not to punish the sinner would be a denial of His justice, so to torment the innocent would be a denial of His goodness. A man hath an absolute power over his beast, and may take away his life, and put him to a great deal of pain; but that moral virtue of pity and tenderness would not permit him to use this right, but when it conduceth to some greater good than can be evil; either for the good of man, which is the end of the creature, or for the good of the poor beast itself, to rid him of a greater misery. None but a savage nature, a disposition to be abhorred, would torture a poor beast merely for his pleasure. It is as much against the nature of God to punish one eternally that hath not deserved it, as it is to deny Himself, and act anything foolishly, and unbeseeming His other perfections, which render Him majestical and adorable.—*Ibid.*

[10973] Conspiracies have at various times sprung up in the world to deprive the Supreme of this peculiar glory—to deny Him a will. Men would fain substitute a law of nature for the living God. They conceive of an unthinking principle like gravitation; they think of a power like the sea, lashing itself, and raging, and advancing without a purpose or a plan, floating a ship and sinking a stone with equal indifference, and continuing afterwards its unmeaning roar. I love the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans: it is a sublime protest against an atheistic human philosophy. I can have no communion with a merely mechanical omnipotence—a sort of infinite ocean that heaves eternally by laws to which it is subject; saving me if I continue to make myself sufficiently buoyant before I am cast on its cold, uncaring bosom; and swallowing me up with the same relentless regularity if I make the leap before I be light enough. This omnipotent principle is not my Saviour; I need as my Saviour the living God who loves me, and whom I may love in return—the God who looked on me when I was lost, and loved me when I was worthless—who saved me from hell, and made me His child. I need from my God not merely a general aspect of benevolence towards the world, under which some of the most vigorous agonizers may struggle into heaven; I need not only permission to save myself, but a hope that the Infinite sees me, knows me, pities me, loves me, grasps me, and holds me in the hollow of His hand, safe against all dangers, until He bring me safe to His eternal rest.—*Rev. W. Arnot.*

III. Nature of the Obedience which is required by the Sovereign God of His Earthly Subjects.

1 It must be an obedience with respect to His authority.

[10974] As the veracity of God is the formal object of faith, and the reason why we believe the things he hath revealed; so the authority of God is the formal object of our obedience, or the reason why we observe the things He hath commanded. There must be a respect to His will as the rule, as well as to His glory as the end. It is not formally obedience that is not done with regard to the order of God, though it may be materially obedience, as it answers the matter of the precept. As when men will abstain from excess and rioting, because it is ruinous to their health, not because it is forbidden by the great Lawgiver; this is to pay a respect to our own convenience and interest, not a conscientious observance to God; a regard to our health, not our Sovereign; a kindness to ourselves, not a justice due to the rights of God. There must not only be a consideration of the matter of the precept as convenient, but a consideration of the authority of the Lawgiver as obligatory.—*Charnock.*

2 It must be an obedience at once loyal and universal.

[10975] We are ordered to serve Him only, "Him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. iv. 10): as the only supreme Lord, as being the highest Sovereign, it is fit He should have the highest obedience before all earthly sovereigns; and as being unparalleled by any among all the nations, so none must have an obedience equal to Him. When God commands, if the highest power on earth countermands it, the precept of God must be preferred before the countermand of the creature. "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts iv. 19). We must never give place to the authority of all the monarchs in the world, to the prejudice of that obedience we owe to the supreme Monarch of heaven and earth: this would be to place the throne of God at the footstool of man, and debase him below the rank of a creature. Loyalty to man can never recompense for the mischief accruing from disloyality to God. All the obedience we are to give to man is to be paid in obedience to God, and with an eye to His precept: therefore what servants do for their masters, they must do as to the Lord (Col. iii. 23); and children are to obey their parents in the Lord (Eph. vi. 1.) The authority of God is to be eyed in all the services payable to man; proper and true obedience hath God solely for its principal and primary object; all obedience to man that interferes with that, and would jostle out obedience to God, is to be refused. What obedience is due to man, is but rendered as a part of obedience to God, and a stooping of His authority. It must be universal obedience. The laws of man are not to be universally obeyed; some may be oppressing and unjust; no man hath authority to make an unjust law, and no subject is bound to obey an unrighteous law; but God being a righteous Sovereign, there is not one of His laws but doth necessarily oblige us to obedience. Whatsoever this supreme Power declares to be His will, it must be our care to observe; man, being His creature, is bound to be subject to whatsoever laws He doth impose, to the meanest as well as to the greatest, they having equally a stamp of Divine authority upon them. We are not to pick and choose among His precepts; this is to pare away His authority, and render Him a half sovereign.—*Ibid.*

3 It must be an obedience onward and sincere.

[10976] As it is a great part of His sovereignty to prescribe laws not only to man in his outward state, but to his conscience, so it is a part of our subjection to receive His laws into our will and hearts. The authority of His laws exceed human laws in the extent and riches of them, and our acknowledgment of His sovereignty cannot be right but by subjecting the faculties of our souls to the Lawgiver of our souls: we else acknowledge His authority to be as limited as the empire of men. When His will not only sways the outward action, but the inward motion, it is a giving Him the honour of His high throne above the throne of mortals. The right of God ought to be preserved undamaged in affection as well as action.—*Ibid.*

4 It must be an obedience indisputable and perpetual.

[10977] All authority requires readiness in the subject; the centurion had it from his soldiers, they went when he ordered them, and came when he beckoned to them (Matt. viii. 9). It is more fit God should have the same promptness from His subjects. We are to obey His orders, though our purblind understanding may not apprehend the reason of every one of them. It is without dispute that He is Sovereign, and therefore it is without dispute that we are bound to obey Him without controlling His conduct. A master will not bear it from his slave; why should God from His creature? Though God admits His creatures sometimes to treat with Him about the equality of His justice, and also about the reason of some commands; yet sometimes He gives no other reason but His own sovereignty, "Thus saith the Lord," to correct the malapertness of men, and exact from them an entire obedience to this unlimited and absolute authority. When Abraham was commanded to offer Isaac, God acquaints him not with the reason of His demand till after (Gen. xxii. 2, 12); nor did Abraham enter any demur to the order, or expostulate with God, either from his own natural affection to Isaac, the hardness of the command, it being as it were a ripping up of his own bowels, nor the quickness

of it after he had been a child of the promise, and a Divine donation above the course of nature. Nor did Paul confer with flesh and blood, and study arguments from nature and interest, to oppose the Divine command when he was sent upon his apostolical employment (Gal. i. 16). The more indisputable His right is to command, the stronger is our obligation to unquestionably obey.—*Ibid.*

[10978] When the mandate goes forth on High, "Thrust in thy sickle," the angel reaper will not pause to query, "Wherefore, Lord?" even should the harvest of the earth be *still unripe.—A. M. A. W.*

[10979] As man is a subject as soon as he is a creature, so he is a subject as long as he is a creature. God's sovereignty is of perpetual duration, as long as He is God : man's obedience must be perpetual while he is a man. God cannot part with His sovereignty, and a creature cannot be exempted from subjection ; we must not only serve Him, but cleave to Him (Deut. xiii. 4). Obedience is continued in heaven, His throne is established in heaven, it must be bowed to in heaven as well as in earth.—*Charnock.*

11

MAJESTY.

I. The Manifestations of this Attribute.

1 In the glory and terror of Divine omnipotence.

[10980] "He spake, and it was done ; He commanded, and it stood fast." The vastness and variety of His works enlarge the conception : "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handywork." "He spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea ; He maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south ; He doeth great things, past finding out, yea, and wonders without number. He stretched out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the waters in the thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them ; He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end." The ease with which He sustains, orders, and controls the most powerful and unruly of the elements, presents His omnipotence under an aspect of ineffable dignity and majesty : By Him all things consist." He brake up for the sea "a decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." "He looketh to the end of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven, to make the weight for the winds, to weigh the waters by measure, to make a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder." "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, meted out heaven with a span, comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the winds in a balance?" The descriptions of the Divine power are often terrible : The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at His reproof ; He divideth the sea by His power." "He removeth the mountains, and they know it not ; He overturneth them in His anger ; He shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble ; He commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and sealeth up the stars." The same absolute subjection of creatures to His dominion is seen among the intelligent inhabitants of the material universe ; and angels, men the most exalted, and evil spirits, are swayed with as much ease as the least-resisting elements : "He maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire." They veil their faces before His throne, and acknowledge themselves His servants. "It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers," "as the dust of the balance, less than nothing, and vanity." "He bringeth princes to nothing." "He setteth up one, and putteth down another ; " "for the kingdom is the Lord's, and He is Governor among the nations." "The angels that sinned He cast down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." The closing scenes of this world complete these transcendent conceptions of the majesty and power of God. The dead of all ages shall rise from their graves at His voice ; and the sea shall give up the dead which are in it. Before His face heaven and earth flee away, the stars fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven are shaken. The dead, small and great, stand before God, and are divided as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats ; the wicked go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.—*Rev. Richard Watson.*

II. The Incomparableness of its Sacred Revelations.

[10981] Nothing, certainly, in the finest writings of antiquity, were all their best thoughts collected as to the majesty and power of God, can bear any comparison to the views thus presented to us by Divine revelation. Were we to forget for a moment, what is the fact, that their noblest notions stand connected with fancies and vain speculations which deprive them of their force, their thought never rises so high, the current of it is broken, the round of lofty conception is not completed ; and, unconnected as their views of Divine power were with the eternal destiny of man, and the very reason of creation, we never hear in them, as in the Scriptures, the thunder of His power. One of the best specimens of heathen devotion is given below, in the hymn of Cleanthes the Stoic ; and, though noble and just, it sinks infinitely in the comparison :—

"Hail, O Jupiter, most glorious of the immortals, invoked under many names, always most powerful, the first ruler of nature, whose law governs all things; hail! for to address thee is permitted to all mortals. For our race we have from thee; we mortals who creep upon the ground, receiving only the echo of thy voice. I, therefore, I will celebrate thee, and will always sing thy power. All this universe rolling round the earth obeys thee wherever thou guidest, and willingly is governed by thee. So vehement, so fiery, so immortal is the thunder which thou holdest subservient in thy unshaken hands; for by the stroke of this all nature was rooted; by this thou directest the common reason which pervades all things, mixed with the greater and lesser luminaries; so great a king art thou, supreme through all; nor does any work take place without thee on the earth, nor in the ethereal sky, nor in the sea, except what the bad perform in their own folly. But do thou, O Jupiter, giver of all blessings, dwelling in the clouds, ruler of the thunder, defend mortals from dismal misfortune; which dispel, O father, from the soul, and grant it to attain that judgment trusting to which thou governest all things with justice; that, being honoured, we may repay thee with honour, singing continually thy works, as becomes a mortal; since there is no greater meed, to men or gods, than always to celebrate justly the universal law."—*Ibid.*

III. Man's Contemplation of the Divine Majesty.

1 In opinions relative to the attribute of majesty it is more requisite to regulate them by our own nature than the Divine, and carefully to avoid whatever might appear injurious to it.

[10982] Great vigilance must be used not to admit anything derogatory to our idea of the Divine majesty, which we must endeavour to keep steady, solid, and connected in all its parts; and I believe, when doubts and perplexities do arise, it is owing to the fluctuation of our ideas, insinuating some speck of human passion or imbecility thereinto, unawares. After the imagination has thus been gradually cast into a new arrangement, it will become as averse to some of the old ideas as it was at first to the present; finding the Divine majesty debased by that partiality and favour, that indignation and abhorrence, that peremptoriness of command, earnest expectation of worship, alteration of measures upon occurrences happening, judgment of characters upon observation of their conduct; which are so necessary for raising it with the generality. For they see the best and greatest of men preferring their friends and favourites, indignant at affronts, detesting villanies, commanding merely to exercise their authority, pleased with homage, varying their schemes according to circumstances, taking their estimation of persons from their outward behaviour: nor do they discern that all this springs from the imperfection of human nature; so that in their apprehension it may well join with the idea of incomparable excellence. Thus the imaginations of mankind being differently modelled, and that in great variety of forms, regard must be had not only to the general turn, but to particular characters, so as to improve the idea of majesty in each, by such way as may prove most effectual.—*Abraham Tucker.*

[10983] Since it is of the utmost consequence, as well to the right condition of our minds as the regularity of our conduct, to entertain an awful and reverential notion of the Almighty, as having power to dispose of all events, and supreme Governor over all creatures: it behoves us to ascribe to Him an attribute of majesty, to conceive Him jealous of His glory, expecting our obedience and adoration; to remove every trifling event and mean object from our thoughts when we have Him in them; and to raise our idea of Him by such images as are suitable to the highest degree, that the weakness and grossness of our faculties will admit. For though the essence of God be incapable of actual defilement by any filthiness co-existent in the same place with it, yet the idea of Him in our hearts may be polluted and rusted over by impurities adhering thereto: so although His omnipresent power cannot be degraded nor His attention engrossed by any operation, but that He may govern events seemingly the most insignificant without descending from His government of worlds and hierarchies, yet the same idea may be degraded by joining it with such minute employments; for that is far from being omnipresent, though the original it was designed to represent be so. For our attention being confined to the spot we think on, we cannot apprehend Him attentive to trifles without taking off His eye from what appear to us the proper functions of His Divine majesty. Nevertheless, we may safely apprehend Him interposing upon extraordinary occasions, for so we see our princes and great men do without lessening their dignity: or taking care of our particular concerns, for we are always of vast importance to ourselves; and what concerns us nearly engaging the mind deeply, serves rather to elevate than depress our idea of the cause operating towards it.—*Ibid.*

12

GLORIOUSNESS.

I. The Manifestation of this Attribute, Man's Chief End in the Plan of Creation.

[10984] The glory of God is the chief end of our creation and being. It was this God chiefly intended and aimed at in making man. For seeing every rational agent proposeth some end

to himself in what he doth, therefore God, being an infinitely wise agent, must have some end in the creation of man; and there being nothing higher or better than His own glory, He could propose no other end to Himself. The end must be more worthy than the means, something higher and better than all created beings, which can be no other than His own glory. Hence it is said, "The Lord hath made all things for Himself." And if all things, then man especially, who is the master-piece of the visible creation. Hence it is that God hath given man a soul capable of glorifying Him above other creatures. Now, seeing the glory of God was the chief end of our creation and being, and therefore it should be the chief end and scope of our lives—seeing His glory was the chief end which He proposed to Himself in making man, it must needs be the chief end which every man ought to propose to himself.

It is not ambition, nor sinful self-seeking, but the glorious excellency of the Divine nature, that God doth all things for Himself, for His own glory. Indeed, for men to seek their own glory, is not glory, but rather matter of shame: self-seeking in creatures is monstrous and incongruous. But for God to seek His own glory, is His eminent excellency: it is indeed His glory, because "He is, and there is none else." Now, if the glory of God be His chief end in all His works, why should it not be our chief end in all our works? Certainly, we cannot act more nobly than by prosecuting, according to our capacity, the chief end and purpose of God.

His glory is most excellent. "O Lord our Lord," says the Psalmist, "how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who hast set Thy glory above the heavens." And, "His name alone is excellent, His glory is above the earth and heaven." The glory of God transcends the thoughts of men and angels. It is of more worth than heaven, of more value than the salvation of the souls of all men. It is dear to God. He hath bestowed many excellent gifts upon His people, but "His glory He will not give to another."—*Wisheart.*

II. The Vileness of Sin as an Offence against this Attribute of God.

[10985] The excellency, majesty, and glory of any person doth exceedingly heighten the offence committed against him. Oh then, of what a horrid and heinous nature must sin be, seeing it strikes against the glorious majesty of God, in comparison of whom the whole creation is less than nothing! Hence it is that there is an infinite evil in sin, in regard of the object against whom it is committed, viz., the glorious God. It is a dishonour done to Him whose "name alone is excellent." Hence the apostle says, "Through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God!" It is a despising and vilifying Him as unworthy to be obeyed or regarded; a preferring base things and sinful satisfactions, to His favour and communion with Him. Sin strikes against the glory of all His attributes. It is a despising His power, a contempt of His justice, a disparaging His wisdom, a rebelling against His sovereignty, and a disgrace to His holiness, which is the glory of all His attributes. If the glorious God should appear to you, and give you but one glimpse of His excellent glory, you would then entertain other thoughts of sin, and of yourselves for sin, than ever you had formerly. Oh, how would you loathe yourselves, as base, vile, and unworthy before Him! The truth is, it cannot be conceived, much less expressed, what a dishonour sin is to God. And this is that which every gracious soul doth chiefly notice in his sad reflections upon his sin. So did David; "Against Thee," says he, "Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight."—*Ibid.*

III. Means whereby the Glory of God may be advanced by His Creatures.

1 By positive holiness and acts of worship.

[10986] God saith, "He that offereth praise glorifieth Me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God." You glorify God when you are fruitful in holiness and obedience. "Herein is My Father glorified," says our Lord, "that ye bear much fruit." And the apostle prays that the Philippians might "be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God." You ought to live and walk so as you may in a sort express the glorious perfections of God in your conversation, and that the image of God may be seen stamped on your very lives. "Ye are an holy nation," says the apostle, "a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises (or virtues) of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." We should be as so many clear glasses wherein the glory of God doth evidently shine forth. But, alas, the best of us are but dim glasses; it is but little of God's glory that we show forth to the world. Your lives should be a constant hymn to the glory and praise of God, by proclaiming to the world a deep sense of the omniscience, infinite justice, and holiness of that God whom you profess to serve. And you should walk so sweetly, both in your general and in your particular callings, as others may be induced to glorify God: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven."

You glorify God by acts of worship, and a diligent attendance on His ordinances. He hath instituted duties and ordinances for His glory and honour. The worship of God is an homage which we owe to Him on the account of His sovereignty. On this ground the Psalmist calls for it: "Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord He is God."—*Ibid.*

2 By cheerfulness and contentment in the Divine service.

[10987] God is dishonoured when such as serve Him are dejected in spirit, and give way to despondency and discouragement. The Persian kings would not suffer such to abide in their presence; they thought it a disparagement to them. It is much for the glory of God that you who are His children, walk cheerfully. This brings up a good report on Him, and on His way. Hereby you give Him the glory of His goodness, and proclaim to the world what a good God and Master you serve. You glorify God by holy Christian contentment in all conditions; and particularly by a cheerful and humble submission to the will of God under afflicting providences, without murmuring or complaining. Hereby you give Him the glory of His wisdom, that He knows what is good for you, and how to carve out your lot for you, better than you do yourselves.—*Ibid.*

3 By loyal consecration of the whole man to the Divine will.

[10988] When you consider the great things God hath done for you; when you think on your glorious privileges, the great blessings you enjoy, and all your gracious receipts; your hearts should and will be ready to cry out, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" Now, you can render nothing to God as a valuable recompense for His favours and blessings. But this is all He seeks, and all that you can give, and that which He will be well satisfied with, that you glorify Him. He lets out to you all the blessings you enjoy for the rent of glory. Resign and give yourselves to God to be His, and to serve Him, and live to Him. "Yield yourselves unto God." You must cordially own His right to you and power over you. Give your hearty consent to be His. None can lay such claim to you as God can do; you can never serve a better Master; and you are never more your own than when given up to Him. Therefore resign yourselves to Him deliberately, and to His whole will in all things. Resign yourselves to Him wholly, soul and body, to be wholly and for ever His. Study much self-denial. Many are discouraged in acting for the glory of God in their place, by incumbrances, inconveniences, and worldly losses they are put to, and scoffs and scorns they meet with. Therefore study to be denied to your own ease, credit, and profit, and all your own interests. Lay all down at God's feet. Count nothing too dear to you, so you may be instrumental in promoting the glory of God.—*Ibid.*

[10989] Believers in Christ are redeemed from sin and wrath by the price of His own precious blood. Under the law, when a man was bought with another's money, his time, strength, and all he had, belonged to his master; so that his master might freely employ him in any lawful service. Therefore he was called his money. This master might freely use him as his own. But you who are sincere believers in Christ are bought at a far higher rate, even with His own precious blood; and you are redeemed from the worst slavery, even that of sin and Satan; so that you are not your own, but His. Therefore, unless you mean to defraud God of His right, you should mind this more than you do, to live, not to yourselves, but to Him that bought you. Especially considering that you are redeemed for this very end, that you might serve God, and live to His glory. Hence it is that believers are said to be redeemed to God: that is, not only to His favour and fellowship, but to His service and obedience.—*Ibid.*

13

OMNIPOTENCE.

I. Its Nature and Source.

[10990] The omnipotence of God is inconceivable and boundless. It arises from the infinite perfection of God, that His power can never be actually exhausted; and, in every imaginable instant in eternity, that inexhaustible power of God can, if it please Him, be adding either more creatures to those in existence, or greater perfection to them; since "it belongs to self-existent being to be always full and communicative, and to the communicated contingent being to be ever empty and craving."—*Rev. Richard Watson.*

[10991] Stackhouse defines the power of God as "that ability and strength whereby He can bring to pass whatever He pleases, whatever His infinite wisdom can direct, or the infinite purity of His will resolve, provided the thing be consistent with itself and compatible with His Divine nature and perfections."

Dorner writes, "Mere fulness of strength does not make God omnipotent. Rather can we only call God Almighty if He is Master of Himself, and is Himself the power over this nature or force. Not, indeed, that He can be, or become, or do everything that we may think. For to be able to desire the illogical or the non-Divine would be no excellence, but a bad possibility eternally excluded from His idea."

II. Its Comprehensiveness.

[10992] The notion that a really great intelligence will concern itself only and exclusively with the broad principles and general interests, to the neglect of particulars and details, is, even when we are speaking of human minds, a mistaken notion. This vulgar contempt for details belongs to the pretentious imitation rather than to the reality of mental power. A really great intelligence combines the observation and study of details with the firm grasp of comprehensive principles; and in this power of combining

things, which in lower minds are found apart, lies the strength and secret of its greatness. Nor is this less, rather it is much more the case, with the Eternal Mind. God is not less Divine in literally numbering the sparrows that fall to the ground, and the hairs of the human head, than in formulating the highest laws which govern either planetary systems or spiritual intelligences; while this comprehensive and penetrating interest and action, spending itself upon the whole outward and inward life of His creatures, is the symptom and expression of the moral interest which the reasonable creation commands in the heart of the Creator.—*Canon Liddon.*

III. Its Active Influence on the World.

[10993] If God is present in all His works, and interested in them, is it reasonable to suppose that He is inactive in the midst of them? Are all His other perfections to be exercised, and His omnipotence to have no room for exertion? As far as we can reason on a theme which is so transcendental in its nature, its seems highly improbable that God should have so constituted everything as to leave no room for His own continued action. As He fills universal space, and can never cease to love His own work, it is reasonable to think that He pervades the universe as an active agent. It may be difficult to determine the precise nature of His action; but, with no experience of a world without an indwelling God, we are inclined to regard His indwelling in the actual world as essential to its continued existence and operation.—*Mc Cosh.*

IV. Its Awe-Inspiring Influence on Man.

[10994] Though in a just idea of the Deity perhaps none of His attributes are predominant, yet, to our imagination, His power is by far the most striking. Some reflection, some comparing, is necessary to satisfy us of His wisdom, His justice, and His goodness. To be struck with His power, it is only necessary that we should open our eyes. But whilst we contemplate so vast an object, under the arm, as it were, of almighty power, and invested upon every side with omnipresence, we shrink into the minuteness of our own nature, and are, in a manner, annihilated before Him. And although a consideration of His other attributes may relieve, in some measure, our apprehensions, yet no conviction of the justice with which it is exercised, nor the mercy with which it is tempered, can wholly remove the terror that naturally arises from a force which nothing can withstand. If we rejoice, we rejoice with trembling; and even whilst we are receiving benefits, we cannot but shudder at a power which can confer benefits of such mighty importance.—*Burke.*

V. Its Manifestations.

1 In creation.

(1) *Of the world.*

[10995] This *creation* of things from nothing speaks an infinite power. The distance between nothing and being, hath been always counted so great, that nothing but an infinite power can make such distances meet together; either for nothing to pass into being, or being to return to nothing. To have a thing arise from nothing was so difficult a text to those that were ignorant of the Scripture, that they knew not how to fathom it; and therefore laid it down as a certain rule that of nothing nothing was made; which is true of a created power, but not of an uncreated and almighty power. A greater distance cannot be imagined than that which is between nothing and something, that which hath no being and that which hath. And a greater power cannot be imagined, than that which brings something out of nothing. We know not how to conceive a nothing, and afterwards a being from that nothing; but we must remain swallowed up in admiration of the cause that gives it being, and acknowledge it to be without any bounds and measures of greatness and power. The further any thing is from being, the more immense must that power be which brings it into being: it is not conceivable that the power of all the angels in one can give being to the smallest spire of grass. To imagine therefore so small a thing as a bee, a fly, a grain of corn, or an atom of dust, to be made of nothing, would stupify any creature in the consideration of it; much more to behold the heavens with all the troop of stars, the earth with all its embroidery, and the sea with all her inhabitants of fish, and man, the noblest creature of all, to arise out of the womb of mere emptiness. Indeed God had not acted as an almighty Creator if He had stood in need of any materials but of His own framing. It had been as much as His Deity was worth if He had not had all within the compass of His own power that was necessary to operation; if He must have been beholden to something without Himself, and above Himself, for matter to work upon. Had there been such a necessity, we could not have imagined Him to be omnipotent, and consequently not God.—*Charnock.*

[10996] Were every falt'ring tongue of man,
Almighty Father! silent in Thy praise,
Thy works themselves would raise a gen'ral voice,
E'en in the depth of solitary woods
By human foot untrod;—proclaim Thy power,
And to the choir celestial Thee resound,
Th'eternal cause, support and end of all!
—*Thomson.*

(2) *Of man.*

1. With special reference to his mental endowments.

[10997] One mind is a more wonderful, more important, more illustrious display of creating power than the whole inanimate universe.

Suns with all their greatness and glory are still without life, without consciousness, without enjoyment; incapable in themselves of action, knowledge, virtue, or voluntary usefulness. A mind, on the contrary, is possessed of all these exalted powers, and is capable of possessing all these sublime attributes. A mind can know, love, and glorify its Creator; can be instamped with His image, and adorned with His beauty and loveliness; and can appear desirable and delightful to His eye. It can "reflect, as a mirror, the glory of the Lord" (for so ought the passage to be translated), "and be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." It can love and bless its fellow-minds, be loved and blessed by them; and become an useful and honourable instrument of advancing endlessly the universal good of the intelligent kingdom. In all these glorious attainments it can advance with an unceasing progress throughout eternity. In this progress it can rise to the heights where the angels now dwell; and passing those heights, can ascend higher and higher, till in the distant ages of endless being it shall look down on the most exalted created excellence which now exists, as the mere dawnings of infantine intelligence. Worlds and suns were created for the use of minds; but minds were created for the use of God.—*T. Dwight.*

2 In government.

(1) *Natural.*

a. As seen in preservation, regulation, and control.

[10998] It is as easy for God to supply thy greatest as thy smallest wants, even as it was within His power to form a system or an atom, to create a blazing sun as to kindle the firefly's lamp.—*Thomas Guthrie.*

[10999] God is incomprehensible in all His attributes, and if we go to fathom the depths of omnipotence we shall lose ourselves in darkness and perplexities; therefore, letting alone all the subtilities of absolute impossibilities, of an independent nature of things, and of the sustentation of existence in substances, let us fix our view upon a prospect we can clearly discern. Let us conceive of God as performing by second causes all the mighty works we see performed, and able to do whatever we can comprehend possible to be done. Let us consider Him giving existence to substances, solidity to matter, perceptivity to spirit, and understanding to man: limiting the ocean, spreading out the earth as a garment, and stretching forth the vast expanse of heaven: rolling the planets in their orbits, fixing the golden sun, and appointing the stars their stations: causing gravitation between large bodies, cohesion between small, elasticity in air and ether: giving motion to the wheels of fortune, stability to the laws of nature, and directing both their certain courses: forming the fibres of plants to fit them for vegetation, the vessels of animals to carry on circulation, and the mental organs to serve as instruments for the understanding: making the earth yield her increase for our sustenance, feeding the cattle upon a thousand hills for our uses, supplying us with air to breathe, water to drink, clothes to put on, and innumerable objects all around to employ and entertain us: commanding the issues of life and death, and having the future condition of spirits at His disposal. The contemplation of these, and a multitude of other things, that a little thought might easily suggest, will give us the fullest idea of omnipotence that we are capable of, and make us sensible the Lord is our continual support, and that in Him we live, and move, and have our being.—*Abraham Tucker.*

[11000] What a power must that be which at one and the same moment works in every vegetable and animal system in this great world; which upholds, quickens, and invigorates every mind; which at the same moment also acts in the same efficacious manner in every part of the solar system, and of all the other systems which compose the universe. What must be the power of Him who sends abroad every moment immense oceans of light from the sun, and innumerable such oceans from the stars; who "holds" all worlds in the "hollow of His hand," retains them exactly in their places, and rolls them through the fields of ether with unceasing, most rapid, and at the same time perfectly harmonious motions; and who, thus accomplishing every purpose for which they were made, prevents the least disturbance, error, or imperfection!—*T. Dwight.*

(2) *Moral.*

a. In restraining the burning passions of men.

[11001] Since the impetus of original corruptions in the blood, conveyed down from Adam to the veins of all his posterity, and universally diffused in all mankind, what wreck and havoc would it make in the world, if it were not suppressed by this Divine power, which presides over the hearts of men! Man is so wretched by nature that nothing but what is vile and pernicious can drop from him. Man drinks iniquity like water, being by nature abominable and filthy (Job xv. 16). He greedily swallows all matter for iniquity, everything suitable to the mire and poison in his nature, and would cast it out with all fierceness and insolence. God Himself gives us the description of man's nature (Gen. vi. 5), that he hath not one good imagination at any time. And the apostle from the Psalmist dilates and comments upon it, Rom. iii. 10, &c.: "There is none righteous, no not one; their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood," &c. This corruption is equal to all, natural to all; it is not more poisonous or more fierce in one man than in another. The root of all men is the same; all the branches therefore do equally possess the villanous nature of the root. No child of Adam can by natural descent be better than Adam, or have less of baseness, and vileness, and venom than Adam.

How fruitful would this loathesome lake be in all kinds of steams! What unbridled licentiousness and headstrong fury would triumph in the world, if the power of God did not interpose itself to lock down the flood-gates of it! What rooting up of human society would there be! how would the world be drenched in blood, the number of malefactors be greater than that of apprehenders and punishers! How would the prints of natural laws be razed out of the heart, if God should leave human nature to itself! Who can read the first chapter to the Romans, vers. 24-31, without acknowledging this truth; where there is a catalogue of those villanies which followed upon God's pulling up the sluices, and letting the malignity of their inward corruption have its natural course? If God did not hold back the fury of man, His garden would be overrun, His vine rooted up; the inclinations of men would hurry them to the worst of wickedness. How great is that power, that curbs, bridles, or changes as many headstrong horses at once and every minute as there are sons of Adam upon the earth! "The floods lift up their waves: the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea" (Psa. xciii. 3, 4): that doth hush and pen in the turbulent passions of men.—*Charnock.*

b. In restraining the malicious nature of the devil.

[11002] Since Satan hath the power of an angel and the malice of a devil, what safety would there be for our persons from destruction, what security for our goods from rifling, by this invisible, potent, and envious spirit, if his power were not restrained and his malice curbed by One more mighty than himself? How much doth he envy God the glory of His creation, and man the use and benefit of it! How desirous would he be in regard of his passion, how able in regard of his strength and subtlety, to overthrow or infect all worship but what was directed to himself, to manage all things according to his lusts, turn all things topsy-turvy, plague the world, burn cities, houses, plunder us of the supports of nature, waste kingdoms, &c., if he were not held in a chain, as a ravenous lion, or a furious wild horse, by the Creator and Governor of the world! What remedy could be used by man against the activity of this unseen and swift spirit? The world could not subsist under his malice.—*Ibid.*

(3) *Judicial.*

[11003] The deluge was no small testimony of His power, in opening the cisterns of heaven, and pulling up the sluices of the sea. He doth but call for the waters of the sea, and they pour themselves upon the face of the earth (Amos ix. 6). In forty days' time the waters overtopped the highest mountains fifteen cubits (Gen. vii. 17, 19, 20); and by the same power He afterwards reduced the sea to its proper channel, as a roaring lion into his den. A shower of fire from heaven upon Sodom and the cities of the plain was a signal display of His power, either in creating it on the sudden for the execution of His righteous sentence, or sending down the element of fire, contrary to its nature (which affects ascent), for the punishment of rebels against the light of nature.

How often hath He ruined the most flourishing monarchies, led princes away spoiled, and overthrown the mighty! which Job makes an argument of His strength (Job xii. 13, 14). Troops of unknown people, the Goths and Vandals, broke the Romans, a warlike people, and hurled down all before them. They could not have had the thought to succeed in such an attempt, unless God had given them strength and motion for the executing His judicial vengeance upon the people of His wrath.—*Ibid.*

3 In redemption.

[11004] As our Saviour is called the Wisdom of God, so He is called the Power of God (1 Cor. i. 24). The army of power was lifted up as high as the designs of wisdom were laid deep. As this way of redemption could not be contrived but by an infinite wisdom, so it could not be accomplished but by an infinite power. None but God could shape such a design, and none but God could effect it. The Divine power in temporal deliverances, and freedom from the slavery of human oppressors, veils to that which glitters in redemption; whereby the devil is defeated in his designs, stripped of his spoils, and yoked in his strength. The power of God in creation requires not those degrees of admiration as in redemption. In creation the world was erected from nothing; as there was nothing to act, so there was nothing to oppose; no victorious devil was in that to be subdued, no thundering law to be silenced, no death to be conquered, no transgression to be pardoned and rooted out, no hell to be shut, no ignominious death upon the cross to be suffered. It had been, in the nature of the thing, an easier thing to Divine power to have created a new world, than repaired a broken and purified a polluted one. This is the most admirable work that ever God brought forth in the world, greater than all the marks of His power in the first creation.—*Ibid.*

VI. Homiletical Hints.

1 The consideration of Divine omnipotence conveys a terrible warning to the obstinate and impenitent.

[11005] Call to mind how many denunciations of future vengeance against impenitent sinners are uttered in His word. Remember that all these were uttered by Him with a perfect knowledge of the guilt of sin, and of the extent of the punishment which it demands; with a perfect conviction of the rectitude of His own designs, and with an immoveable purpose to carry them into execution. How certain it is, then, that they will be exactly executed; and that the impious and the profligate, the im-

penitent and the unbelieving, will drink the dregs of Divine indignation. Consider in how many forms of alarm these threatenings are delivered; what woes they contain, and what that is terrible they do not contain. With these affecting things in view, remember, that He who has denounced these woes, He who will execute these denunciations, is the Almighty God. How fearfully able is such a God to inflict every punishment, and to execute every threatening! What amazing sources of suffering are within the limits of His omniscience and omnipotence! How easily can He make every pore, faculty, and thought the channel and the seat of inexpressible anguish!—*T. Dwight.*

8 **The consideration of Divine omnipotence inspires the children of God with unwavering confidence and trust.**

[11006] In the omniscience of God we are presented with ample ability to contrive, and in His omnipotence with ample ability to accomplish, every part of this amazing sum of good. To Him who willed the universe into being, it is equally easy to create great enjoyments as little, many as few, endless as momentary. The vast system of good which He has promised He can call into existence in a moment, with the same ease with which He can create an insect or an atom. Whatever He gives, His store cannot be lessened; nor can a preceding communication of good be with Him a reason for refusing or neglecting to communicate again. Immeasurably bountiful, He can never be weary of giving: immeasurably powerful, He can never be weary of providing.

From the omnipotence of God every righteous man may then confidently expect a final deliverance from all his enemies, sorrows, and sins, from death and the grave, from future perdition and eternal woe. He may be certainly assured that the same glorious and everlasting Friend will communicate to him, and to his fellow-Christians, immortal life; will enlarge their minds with increasing knowledge, will improve them with ever-growing virtue, and supply them with endlessly advancing happiness. —*Ibid.*

14

OMNIPRESENCE.

I. The Nature of Divine Omnipresence.

1 **It is a property belonging to God's essence, knowledge, and power.**

(1) *God is essentially everywhere, in heaven and earth, and consequently present with all creatures.*

[11007] He is essentially present in all places. It is as reasonable to think the essence of God to be everywhere as to be always; immensity is as rational as eternity. That indivisible essence which reaches through all times may as well reach through all places. It is more excellent to be always than to be everywhere; for to be always in duration is intrinsical, to be everywhere is extrinsic: if the greater belongs to God, why not the less? As all times are a moment to His eternity, so all places are as a point to His essence. As He is larger than all time, so He is vaster than all place. The nations of the world are to Him "as the dust of the balance, or drop of a bucket: the nations are accounted as the small dust" (Isa. xl. 15). The essence of God may well be thought to be present everywhere with that which is no more than a grain of dust to Him, and in all those isles, which, if put together, are "a very little thing" in His hand. Therefore, saith a learned Jew, if a man were set in the highest heavens, he would not be nearer to the essence of God than if he were in the centre of the earth. Why may not the presence of God in the world be as noble as that of the soul in the body, which is generally granted to be essentially in every part of the body of man, which is but a little world, and animates every member by its actual presence, though it exerts not the same operation in every part? The world is less to the Creator than the body to the soul, and needs more the presence of God than the body needs the presence of the soul.—*Charnock.*

[11008] The universe, we have seen, is finite; there is, consequently, an immeasurable amplitude beyond the utmost bounds of creation. Now, let us suppose that the Deity contemplated the progressive extension of creation, by adding thereto worlds upon worlds, and systems beyond systems, beyond the confines of the present universe, and to continue this progressive extension of His empire for ever. The supposition is rational; it comports with the power, wisdom, and all-sufficiency of Jehovah; but such an enlargement of creation could not be effected if the presence of Jehovah were limited, because, in the lapse of ages, that extension would reach the limits of His presence. A being cannot exert His agency where He is not; so to limit His presence is to limit His power; to deny His ubiquity is to deny His omnipotence, and to attempt to limit and circumscribe that Being whose nature is absolutely perfect, independent, and all-sufficient; it is, in fact, to deny "that all things are possible with God." Such a contradiction cannot be admitted, and, therefore, we must conclude, on this ground, that His presence is unbounded.—*Wm. Cooke, D.D.*

[11009] Apart from the bootless jargon of scholastic controversies and metaphysical subtleties, we simply maintain that such is the omnipresence of God that His personal consciousness, intelligence, and power, and every other perfection, are everywhere; that within and beyond the bounds of the universe there is not a point or space respecting which it may be said, God is not there. The notion that God is the soul of the world, though false and detest-

able in the pantheistic sense, is true so far as it expresses the pervading presence and presiding and directing agency of the Deity through the entire universe. The Infinite Spirit is present with every part of His creation, as intimately as the soul of man is present throughout all the parts of that corporeal substance which it animates and sustains. He fills all space, penetrates all substances, and pervades all minds. He is as intimately present with His creatures as they are to themselves, and unites Himself with the very constitution of their nature. They exist within the boundless ocean of His presence, the grasp of His omnipotence, the sphere of His energy, and the light of His countenance. "In Him they live, and move, and have their being." Robert Hall observes, "We frequently speak of God dwelling in the world by the manifestations of His power and providence; but it may with equal truth be said that the world dwells in God—all creatures being surrounded by His presence and inclosed in His essence."—*Ibid.*

[11010] God is behind all space. What a solemn mystery there is in this idea of space! Modern science has added to the benefits which it has conferred upon us, this also, that it has enlarged our conceptions of space. How much more worthily we are enabled to think of the universe and empire of God than those could have done who regarded the firmament as a solid shell of the earth, star-gemmed, fixed a few miles above it, and revolving around it for the purpose of alternating day and night! One of the most conspicuous respects in which astronomy has proved herself the handmaid of devotion has been by revealing to us in part the scale on which the universe is built. What heights and depths of space the telescopes of Rosse and Herschel have enabled us to penetrate! What awe seizes upon the soul, as viewed through their powerful lenses the faint nebulæ resolve themselves into clusters of shining worlds, and through the spaces between these worlds, across immeasurable and inconceivable distances, other nebulæ burst upon the astonished vision! as all these countless suns and systems are detected to be revolving around the brightest of the Pleiades! Is that to us faint star the centre of the universe? Is it there that God sits enthroned? Is that the one stable and unmoving orb? Or is that moving too, carrying the innumerable suns and worlds that are linked on to it around some vaster centre? Where is the centre of the universe? Where is its circumference? How far must we travel before we reach a margin beyond which space does not extend? Is there such a margin? But though we had reached the last world that revolves around the great unknown centre, we should not have come upon a tenantless void: we should still be in the presence of God, in the hollow of whose hand all worlds and suns and systems lie. "Whither, O Lord, shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me."—*R. A. Bertram.*

II. Its Diversified Manifestations.

[11011] While the presence of God is everywhere, it is not manifested everywhere alike. In those boundless regions of immensity where no created being is, there can be as yet no objective manifestation of the Deity—but in every part of creation there is a display of the Divine presence and perfections; and wherever intelligent beings reside, this display is recognized. Yet this recognition is diversified, according to the capacities and condition of the various orders of intelligent beings. Some mentally behold the traces of His presence by the objective display of His attributes, but have no sense of His favour, while others have both a mental perception of His presence and a consciousness of His favour; for He manifests Himself to His people as He does not unto the world. As there is thus a diversity as to the manifestation of the Deity's presence in different regions of the universe, and as perceived by intelligent beings of different states and capacities, it is only reasonable to suppose that there is a distinct region where God, in a manner far more glorious, unfolds His natural and moral attributes, and reveals the tokens of His favour to upright and holy intelligences. This rational supposition is conformable to the revealed doctrine of the spiritual world, where angels and glorified human spirits are congregated to enjoy the beatific vision of God. As in the Jewish temple there was the outer court, the holy place, and the most holy; so in the created universe there are inner and outer circles. — *Wm. Cooke, D.D.*

III. The Influences of its Realization.

1 It will be a shield against all temptations.

[11012] God is present, is enough to blunt the weapons of hell; this will secure us from a ready compliance with any base and vile attractives, and curb that headstrong principle in our nature that would join hands with them. The thoughts of this would, like the powerful presence of God with the Israelites, take off the wheels from the chariots of our sensitive appetites, and make them perhaps move slower at least towards a temptation. How did Peter fling off the temptation which had worsted him? Upon a look from Christ. The actuated faith of this would stifle the darts of Satan, and fire us with an anger against his solicitations as strong as the fire that inflames the darts. Moses' sight of "Him that was invisible" strengthened him against the costly pleasures and luxuries of a prince's court (Heb. xi. 27). We are utterly senseless of a Deity if we are

not moved with this item from our consciences, God is present. Had our first parents actually considered the nearness of God to them when they were tempted to eat of the forbidden fruit, they had not probably so easily been overcome by the temptation. What soldier would be so base as to revolt under the eye of a good general? or what man so negligent of himself as to rob a house in the sight of a judge? Let us consider that God is as near to observe us as the devil to solicit us; yea, nearer. The devil stands by us, but God is in us. We may have a thought the devil knows not, but not a thought but God is actually present with, as our souls are with the thoughts they think; nor can any creature attract our heart, if our minds were fixed on that invisible presence that contributes to that excellency, and sustains it, and considered that no creature could be so present with us as the Creator is.—*Charnock.*

2 It will be a spur to holy actions.

[11013] What man would do an unworthy action, or speak an unhandsome word in the presence of his prince? The eye of a general inflames the spirit of a soldier. Why did David "keep God's testimonies"? Because he considered that "all his ways were before him" (Psa. cxix. 168); because he was persuaded his ways were present with God, God's precepts should be present with him. The same was the cause of Job's integrity; "Doth He not see my ways?" (Job xxxi. 4); to have God in our eye is the way to be sincere, "Walk before Me, as in My sight, and be thou perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1). Communion with God consists chiefly in an ordering our ways as in the presence of Him that is invisible. This would make us spiritual, careful and watchful in all our passions, if we considered that God is present with us as with the angels in heaven; who though they have a presence of glory above us, yet have not a greater measure of His essential presence than we have. What an awe had Jacob upon him when he considered God was present in Bethel (Gen. xxviii. 16, 17). If God should appear visibly to us when we were alone, should we not be reverent and serious before Him? God is everywhere about us, He doth encompass us with His presence; should not God's seeing have the same influence upon us as our seeing God? He is not more essentially present if He should so manifest Himself to us than when He doth not. If this truth were impressed upon our spirits, we should more blush to have our souls daubed with sin. If the most sensual man be ashamed to do a dishonest action in the sight of a grave and holy man, one of great reputation for wisdom and integrity, how much more should we lift up ourselves in the ways of God, who is infinite and immense, is everywhere, and infinitely superior to man, and more to be regarded! We could not seriously think of His presence, but there would pass some intercourse between us; we should be putting up some petition upon the sense of our indigence, or sending up our praises to Him upon the sense of His bounty. The actual thoughts of the presence of God is the life and spirit of all religion; we could not have sluggish spirits and a careless watch if we considered that His eye is upon us all day.—*Ibid.*

3 It will be a source of purest comfort and consolation.

[11014] There is something in the thought of being surrounded, even upon earth, by the Majesty on high, that gives a peculiar elevation and serenity of soul. To be assured in the loneliest hour of unknown or neglected sorrow, that every sigh ascends to the eternal throne, and every secret prayer can be heard in heaven; to feel that, in every act of conscious rectitude, the heart can appeal, amidst all the contradictions of sinners, to One who seeth not as man seeth, produces a peace which the world can never give. Feeling itself, like Enoch walking with God, the heart perceives a spirituality and purity in every joy, a mercy and a balm in every sorrow, and, exalted above the intrusions of an intermeddling world, has its "conversation in heaven."—*Mathew.*

[11015] Should fate command me to the farthest verge
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,
Rivers unknown to song, where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on the Atlantic isles; 'tis nought to me:
Since God is ever present.

[11016] The Christian does not think of God as a spy upon his actions, or resent the doctrine of His omnipresence as intrusive inquisitiveness, but he delights in the assurance that the Lord is by his side. The words, "Thou God seest me," so often used as if they were a warning to the sinner, were first employed by Hagar as an expression of her gratitude for the appearance of God to her by the fountain on the way to Shur (Gen. xvi. 7–13). They are not, therefore, expressive of alarm, but rather of delight; and every true believer can appropriate them in that sense. For the Lord is as near to those who love Him now as He was then to Hagar; and if we could only remember that, we should be delivered from despondency and encouraged to stand fast before all our spiritual adversaries. The child is not afraid to venture even in the darkest night when his father is by his side; and if we but realized that God is at our right hand, we should never be moved. For there is no help so available to us as His. With the speed of thought we may communicate with Him. With unspoken ejaculation we have but to lift our hearts to Him, and He will respond. To whom, then, are we so near as we are to Him? He is to those who love Him a constant companion, friend and protector, One with whom I can enjoy the sweetest fellowship, and from whom I may receive the richest blessings. —*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*

[11017] Obscurity and meanness of condition cannot degrade us beneath His notice and sympathy. He delights to dwell in the poor and humble. Misrepresentation and calumny cannot conceal our character and motives from His sympathy and approbation. The deepest and most complicated affliction cannot place us beyond the reach of His consolations and succours. Imprisonment in the deepest dungeon cannot shut out access to His mercy-seat. We can never be where prayer cannot reach His ear. Jonah was heard from the whale's belly; Jeremiah from the dungeon; David from the ends of the earth; Daniel from the lion's den. Death cannot separate our spirits from God, nor the grave so dissolve our body as that His omniscience cannot discern and collect all the scattered particles. "I am continually with Thee: Thou hast holden me by my right hand: Thou shalt guide me by Thy counsel and afterwards receive me to glory."—*John Hirst, M.A.*

IV. Illustrations and Confirmatory Proofs of the Doctrine of Divine Omnipresence.

1 From the world of matter.

[11018] The matter which composes the world is evidently lifeless and thoughtless; it must, therefore, be incapable of moving itself, or designing or producing any effects which require wisdom or power. The matter of our world, or the small parts which constitute the air, the earth, and the waters, is yet continually moved, so as to produce effects of this kind: such are the innumerable herbs and trees and fruits which adorn the earth, and support the countless millions of creatures who inhabit it. There must therefore be constantly present, all over the earth, a most wise, mighty, and good Being, the author and director of these motions.

We cannot, it is true, see Him with our bodily eyes, because He is a pure spirit; yet this is not any proof that He is not present. A judicious discourse, a series of kind actions, convince us of the presence of a friend, a person of prudence and benevolence. We cannot see the present mind, the seat and principle of these qualities; yet the constant, regular motion of the tongue, the hand, and the whole body (which are the instruments of our souls, as the material universe and all the various bodies in it are the instruments of the Deity), will not suffer us to doubt that there is an intelligent and benevolent principle within the body which produces all these skilful motions and kind actions.—*Amory.*

[11019] This earth is in itself a dead, motionless mass, and void of all counsel; yet proper parts of it are continually raised through the small pipes which compose the bodies of plants and trees, and are made to contribute to their growth, to open and shine in blossoms and leaves, and to swell and harden into fruit. Could blind, thoughtless particles thus continually keep on their way, through numberless windings, without once blundering, if they were not guided by an unerring hand? Can the most perfect human skill from earth and water form one grain, much more a variety of beautiful and relishing fruits? Must not the directing Mind who does all this constantly be most wise, mighty, and benevolent? Must not the Being who thus continually exerts His skill and energy around us, for our benefit, be confessed to be always present, and concerned for our welfare?

Can these effects be ascribed to anything below an all-wise and almighty Cause? And must not this Cause be present wherever He acts? Were God to speak to us every month from heaven, and, with a voice loud as thunder, declare that He observes, provides for, and governs us, this would not be a proof, in the judgment of sound reason, by many degrees so valid; since much less wisdom and power are required to form such sounds in the air than to produce these effects, and to give, not merely verbal declarations, but substantial evidences of His presence and care over us.

In every part and place of the universe with which we are acquainted, we perceive the exertion of a power which we believe, mediately or immediately, to proceed from the Deity. For instance, in what part or point of space that has ever been explored do we not discover attraction? In what regions do we not find light? In what accessible portion of our globe do we not meet with gravity, magnetism, electricity, together with the properties, also, and powers of organized substances.—*Ibid.*

2 From the world of mind.

[11020] It would be beyond the province of our argument to adduce the operations of God upon the soul of the Christian—enlightening, comforting, and sanctifying his nature—in evidence of the omnipresence of Jehovah; but the direct agency of the Creator in the operations of instinct belongs, undoubtedly, to the class of facts which are legitimately at our disposal. The phenomena of instinct evince a high degree of intelligence somewhere; and that intelligence does not reside in the animals themselves, but in God their Creator. In the operations of instinct, therefore, we see innumerable animals acting out the thoughts and purposes of God—acting under the suggestions and influences of an infinite Mind, ever present, and ever operating. It is not for us to explain the mysterious connection between the mind of Deity and the various forms of animal existence, but we are certain there is a connection of some sort.—*Wm. Cooke, D.D.*

3 From personal testimony.

[11021] The celebrated Linnæus testified, in his conversation, writings, and actions, the greatest sense of God's omniscience; yea, he was so strongly impressed with the idea, that he wrote over the door of his library, *Innocui vivite, Numen adest;* Live innocently; God is present.

15

OMNISCIENCE.

I. The Necessity of this Attribute.

1 As essential to Divine perfection.

(1) *In the ordinations of Providence generally.*

[11022] Which way soever God governs the world, and what influence soever He has over men's minds, we are sure that the governing and preserving His own workmanship is so plainly a perfection that it must belong to a being infinitely perfect; and there is such a chain in things—those of the greatest consequence arising often from small and inconsiderate ones—that we cannot imagine a Providence, unless we believe everything to be within its care and view. The only difficulty that has been made in apprehending this has arisen from the narrowness of men's minds, who have measured God rather by their own measure and capacity than by that of infinite perfection, which, as soon as it is considered, will put an end to all further doubtings about it. When we perceive that a vast number of objects enter in at our eye by a very small passage, and yet are so little jumbled in that crowd that they open themselves regularly, though there is no great space for that neither; and that they give us a distinct apprehension of many objects that lie before us, some even at a vast distance from us, both of their nature, colour, and size; and by a secret geometry, from the angles that they make in our eye, we judge of the distance of all objects, both from us and from one another; if to this we add the vast number of figures that we receive and retain long and with great order in our brains, which we easily fetch up either in our thoughts or in our discourses; we shall find it less difficult to apprehend how an infinite mind should have the universal view of all things ever present before it.—*Bp. Burnet.*

(2) *In the distinctions of intelligence severally.*

[11023] To the perfect intelligence, where all things, if they appear at all, must appear as they really are, and in all their relations, whether universal or particular, there cannot be a whole, as a whole, without a distinct vision, and a distinct thought of every part, as a part, in its relation to such whole, and to every other part.—*Prof. Taylor Lewis.*

II. The Comprehensiveness of Divine Omniscience.

1 God's omniscience comprises supreme knowledge of Himself in all His infinite perfections.

[11024] This of itself may be regarded as infinite knowledge. It is the perfect knowledge of a nature that is infinite. And surely from this may reasonably be inferred the perfect knowledge of all that is finite. The created cannot comprehend the uncreated; for that is the same thing as saying that the finite cannot comprehend the infinite. The knowledge of God is knowledge that transcends, and ever must transcend, all created capacity. Were the capacities of all the rational creation combined into one, it would still, in all its unimaginable amplitude, be infinitely less than infinite. But God comprehends Himself. And the Being who comprehends what (as before demonstrated) is without limits in extent, in duration, in universality of presence, cannot surely be ignorant of aught that is subject to the limitations of time and space. That knowledge which includes among its subjects the infinite nature and the infinite attributes of Deity, we are unable for one moment so much as to imagine limited.

Deity is, strictly and properly, the only object of knowledge possessing infinitude. It is, therefore, the only object of knowledge that can fill and fully engage His own infinite mind. All that is created is necessarily limited. The universe has its bounds. On this account it is only by inference that we conclude the knowledge to be infinite that embraces the universe, or the power to be infinite that framed it. The inference, as to both, we hold to be perfectly legitimate and irresistible. But in the case I now speak of, there is no inference. The object of the knowledge is itself infinite; and the knowledge must be infinite that comprehends it. And the absurdity were preposterous indeed that could set limits to the knowledge of that mind in any other quarter. Comprehending itself, it must comprehend all things else; all things else "living and moving and having their being" in the infinite.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

2 God's omniscience comprises a perfect knowledge of all His creatures.

[11025] Every single creature, great or small, in that universe, as well as every circumstance relative to every creature, is perfectly known to Him. And all is known at the same instant, and with the same complete and unerring distinctness. Every wheel, every pin, every junction, in the prodigiously extensive and complicated machinery, is perpetually under His all-observant eye; an eye which is, at the same moment, in every place; and which, in a way most mysterious and incomprehensible to our minds, and eminently fitted to inspire them with "reverence and godly fear," and with the lowest sentiments of self-annihilation before Him, embraces at once the stupendous whole, and bends an undistracted and unremitting attention to every, even the minutest, part.

Of the brute creation He Himself says, with the majesty of sovereign and universal proprietor: "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine." And of the minuteness of the knowledge, what terms could be more expressive than those of Christ: "A sparrow falleth not to the ground without your Father. The very hairs of your head are all numbered."

The language respecting the sparrows as given by Luke, is, if possible, still more expressive: "Not one of them is forgotten before God."

With regard to His rational creation all must be known. This, indeed, is deduced as an inference from the preceding. If the unintelligent, surely the rational. If sparrows, surely men. "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." All are known; and everything relating to each. The "hairs of the head being all numbered," conveys the idea of minuteness of acquaintance and oversight, as strongly as it seems possible to put it in words. All the thoughts, all the words, all the actions of all the countless individuals in our world, and in all worlds, come within the range of His universal knowledge.—*Ibid.*

3 God's omniscience comprises a perfect knowledge of all possibilities.

[11026] The existence of such knowledge seems clear from one consideration, were there no other, viz., that the choice of any particular plan as the best includes the idea of all other possible plans being before the mind of Deity in comparison. At the same time, we must here too beware of overlooking the infinite disparity between Deity and His creatures. We must not imagine any process of deliberation, of weighing the respective recommendations of different modes of action, or courses of administration; any protracted balancing of their advantages and disadvantages, so as to come to a determinate choice. The decisions of the Godhead ought to be regarded as instantaneous, and as formed on a discernment as immediate and intuitive as it is complete and discriminative of all that is possible. Perhaps, indeed, it may be fairly questioned whether it be in harmony with correct ideas of the infinite perfection of Deity to suppose any other plan than the best suggesting itself to His mind. It may be regarded as giving us a loftier, and therefore a worthier, conception of the Infinite One, to conceive of the entire scheme of creation and providence, including redemption, presenting itself in faultless perfection to His mind; and carried out into reality, with nothing afterwards requiring change, or occasioning regret. And yet we cannot rid ourselves of the conception that even this involves an intuitive knowledge of all possibilities.

And so with regard to human conduct. The control exercised over it, in evolving the effectuation of His own designs, obviously implies a perfect acquaintance with what would have been the results of any other arrangement, of every other; how, that is, every individual of mankind would have acted under a change of circumstances; with all the hypothetical possibilities, in short, of human character, and the influence of circumstances upon it.—*Ibid.*

4 God's omniscience comprises a perfect knowledge of events, past, present, and to come.

[11027] At one comprehensive glance He sees all that is passing in our world, and in every world, at the same instant! "His eyes are in every place." Nothing, anywhere in the universe, even for one moment escapes His notice, His all embracing survey. All past events and existences are known to Him as perfectly as the present. He forgets nothing. Nothing ever escapes from His mind. No, nor does anything ever, through the longest lapse of time, become less distinct in the impression of it. The entire history of all worlds, from the moment when He called the first into being, is present to His mind, in all its minutest details; and the personal history of every individual inhabitant in each of the numberless worlds that crowd immensity! In regard to His knowledge of the past as well as of the future it may truly be said: "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day!" The passing away of centuries and millenniums does not obliterate from His remembrance a single fact, or a single circumstance of a fact, nor, even in the most distant degree, impair its vividness. And all this acquaintance with the universal past we are to conceive of as being before the Divine Mind, without even the slightest imaginable effort of recollection! all there, and always there, like one vast idea, inconceivably complicated, and yet perfectly clear, distinct, unravelled! It is evident that we can infer from God's omnipresence no more than His knowledge of the present; not at all His knowledge of the past or the future, but solely of what now is. But both of these form essentials of the Divine omniscience.—*Ibid.*

III. Its Display at the Final Judgment.

[11028] On this solemn day, all mankind will be judged "according to the deeds done in the body." That these may be the foundation of "the righteous judgment of God," it is indispensable that they should be known clearly and certainly: the sins, together with all their aggravations and palliations; the virtues, with all their diminutions and enhancements. To the same end it is equally necessary that the system of retribution should also be perfectly comprehended, so that every administration of reward, both to the righteous and the wicked, should, throughout eternity, be measured out to each individual exactly as his whole character demands. Of course, the knowledge which will here be indispensable will be a perfect comprehension of this system, together with all the moral conduct, and all the circumstances, of the innumerable beings who will be judged. The display of this knowledge, it is evident, will be the greatest display announced by the Scriptures, and infinitely greater than any other conceivable by the human mind. This display will be also far more affecting than any other, for on it will depend all the immortal concerns of the innumerable children of Adam. Yet such a display will certainly be made, to such an extent, as to exhibit God in the character of an upright judge, an impartial dispenser of good

and evil to His creatures; as to stop every mouth, and force every heart to confess, "that He is just when He judgeth, and clear when He condemneth."

What manifestations of the human character will then be made! How different will be the appearance which pride, ambition, and avarice, sloth, lust, and intemperance, will wear in the sight of God, in the sight of the assembled universe, and in the sight of those who have yielded themselves up to these evil passions, from that which they have customarily worn in the present world! How low will the haughty man be bowed down! How will the splendour of power and conquest set in darkness! How will the golden mountains of opulence melt away, and leave the dreaming possessor poor, and naked, and miserable, and in want of all things! How will the sensualist awake out of his momentary vision of pleasure, and find it all changed to "vanity and vexation of spirit!" How little, in innumerable instances, will the worldly great then appear! How contemptible the renowned: how weak the powerful: how foolish "the wise men and disputers of this world"!—*T. Dwight, LL.D.*

IV. Homiletical Hints.

1 The lessons of its contemplation.

(1) *The contemplation of Divine omniscience should endue us with a spirit of deepest humility and reverence.*

[11029] Well may the prudent consideration of what hath been said concerning the depth of Divine omniscience put the wisest of men in mind of their nescience; keep them from leaning to their own understandings, and give them just occasion to think of an answer to Zophar's question: "What canst thou know?" If the secrets of nature do so puzzle thee, what canst thou know concerning those much greater secrets of grace and glory? of which Luther very excellently says: "Philosophy receives them not, faith doth. The authority of Scripture is greater by far than the capacity of our wit; and the Holy Ghost than Aristotle." Well may the depth of Divine understanding, which the Psalmist saith is infinite—"Great is the Lord, and of great power; His understanding is infinite"—cause us to reflect upon the shallowness, the infiniteness, yea, the folly of our own knowledge.—*Arrowsmith.*

(2) *The contemplation of Divine omniscience should endue us with a spirit of thankfulness and confidence.*

[11030] "Let Him be greatly confided in by all His people." That of St. John, "Ye are of God, little children; and greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world," should be made use of as a precious receipt against the most deadly poison that can at any time be administered to them. The church indeed is very often put upon renewing Jehoshaphat's complaint, and crying out, "We have no might against this great company" (perhaps both of wicked men and wicked spirits) "that comes against us; neither know we what to do." But so long as she can add, as he there doth, "Our eyes are upon thee," this contemplation of her great God and Saviour may support her against the fear of them all.—*Ibid.*

(3) *The contemplation of Divine omniscience should be an effectual restraint upon sin.*

[11031] What would you say if wherever you turned, whatever you were doing, whatever thinking, whether in public or private, with a confidential friend, telling your secrets, or alone planning them, if, I say, you saw an eye constantly fixed on you, from whose watching, though you strove ever so much, you could never escape; and even if you closed your own eye to avoid, you still fancied that to get rid of it was impossible—that it could perceive your every thought? The supposition is awful enough. There is such an Eye, though the business and struggles of the world too often prevent us from considering this awful truth. In crowds we are too much interrupted, in the pursuit of self-interest we are too much perverted, in camps we are struggling for life and death, in courts we see none but the eye of a human sovereign; nevertheless, the Divine eye is always upon us, and when we least think of it, is noting all, and, whatever we may think of it, will remember all.—*De Vere.*

[11032] "Wo unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord: and their works are in the dark; and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?" a presumption that there is none by to take notice of them. Suppose it were so; yet men are bound to reverence themselves. That of Ausonius is excellent advice: "When thou art about to act anything unseemly, be afraid of thyself, although there be no other witness." But so it is not, for conscience is by, concerning which Lactantius produceth an admirable speech out of Seneca: "O thou mad man! what will it profit thee to have none conscious of thy crime, so long as thou hast a conscience that is?" But that thou wilt say is part of thyself. True; wherefore I add, God is by, of whom the apostle emphatically saith, "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." Conscience, we are wont to say, is a thousand witnesses; and let it be withal considered, that God is a thousand consciences, both for intimacy of presence and perspicacity in discerning.—*Arrowsmith.*

2 The influences of its due realization.

(1) *It humbles the pride of human intellect.*

[11033] When we contemplate the all-perfect knowledge of the Infinite One, we feel as nothing before Him. How limited our acquaintance with the works and ways of the Creator and Ruler of the universe! How very little do we know of other worlds! How little even of our own—of its internal structure, of its numberless productions, of its living population! Our

acquaintance with the past, how partial, confused, uncertain!—with the present, by what narrow confines bounded, whether as derived from our own observation and experience, or from the information of others! And the future, it is a blank! And how little we know of one another: how little even of ourselves! And, above all, how little we know of the highest and sublimest, and, amongst the objects of knowledge, the most interesting to us or to any order of created intelligences, the nature and attributes of the Infinite! The knowledge of the most profound philosopher, or of the most accomplished and best-informed historian, is, in comparison with the Divine knowledge, infinitely less than the knowledge of the infant that has just learned the first letter of the alphabet in comparison with that of the philosopher or historian. And yet, such is the pride of intellect, such the vainglorious self-elation of knowledge, that it too often induces the forgetfulness of God! the forgetfulness of that infinite Being from whom all the objects of their research and scientific demonstration derived their existence, and to whom they themselves are indebted for their powers of knowing them, or for knowing anything at all. Let the wisest be humble. The humbler still the wiser. The more he thinks of the infinite God, the more will he be ashamed of all self-consequence; the more will he feel that vanity and pride are folly.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

(2) *It abases the pride of self-righteousness and knowledge.*

[11034] Surely when men indulge the fancy that they may stand before God on the meritorious ground of their own virtues, they forget what God is, with whom they have to do. They forget both His perfect holiness and His omniscience. Would the best of us be willing that even an earthly friend should be privy to all his words, all his actions, all his thoughts, all his desires, all his purposes, all his emotions? Think, then, of Him who "searcheth the heart and the reins." He is "greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." He knows whether we think about Him, often or seldom; and when we do think of Him, what our thoughts of Him are, worthy or unworthy. He knows whether we bow the knee to Him in secret, whether frequently or rarely; and whether the heart is bowed with the knee. He follows us from the closet to the family, and from the family to the intercourse of public life. He searches our hearts all the while. He knows how much greater influence, in restraining us from what is evil, the thought of some fellow-creature's presence has than the assurance of His. He knows all our sins of omission as well as commission; how often we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and have left undone those things which we ought to have done. He has known all from the beginning, every moment: and the entire catalogue of our demerits is, at the same instant, present to His mind, who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon sin."

Such considerations may well draw from every heart the exclamation of Job: "I have heard of Thee by the earing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." And whither, with this overwhelming conviction on his conscience and heart, can the sinner betake himself but to the cross? There alone are forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace, and hope, to be found. There the omniscient God, with the full knowledge of all the sinner's guilt, cancels it for ever when that sinner makes the cross and the blood shed on it his plea for mercy.—*Ibid.*

16

WISDOM.

I. Its Essential and Independent Character.

[11035] The Bible ascribes to God unlimited and independent wisdom. He is called "the only wise God," both in contradistinction from all the false gods of heathenism, which possess neither knowledge nor power, which are "vanity and a thing of nought;" and also in contradistinction from all creatures. He alone possesses wisdom in and by Himself, underived from any extraneous source. His infinite mind contained from eternity, within itself, ere any other being existed, the boundless stores of "wisdom and knowledge." All the knowledge and wisdom to be found in the created universe has been, and continues to be, imparted by Him. And all the creatures by whom it is possessed depend on Him every moment for the possession and the exercise of them. The mind of no creature, in heaven, earth, or hell, can think a single thought independently of God. Not that God suggests the thoughts. No: but He sustains the minds that think them. He must necessarily, by His physical influence, sustain those minds in their existence and in the exercise of their faculties; while yet multitudes of the thoughts that are formed in and by them are thoughts of evil, and altogether abhorrent to the purity of His moral nature. The minds are of His creation, and sustained by His power; but the thoughts of these minds are their own creation, not His; and they are responsible to Him for every one of them.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

II. The Leading Characteristics of Wisdom as displayed in all God's Works.

[11036] Wisdom is manifested in the conception of great and comprehensive generalizations. The Creator's wisdom comprehends all nature, however vast, and all the beings and events comprised within all duration — past, present, and future.

Wisdom contemplates no ends but what are good in themselves. The ends and purposes of God are not only good but the best that can be accomplished.

Wisdom seeks to effect its purposes by the most simple, comprehensive, and effective means. Such are the means employed by God in His operations.

Wisdom is seen in rendering the subordinate parts of a system subservient to the higher. In the works of God this order and subserviency are everywhere displayed.

Wisdom is manifested in connecting things of diverse and opposite natures into one harmonious whole. Such combination and harmony are displayed to perfection in all the works of God.

Wisdom is seen in an economy in which nothing is lost or wasted, but everything turned to good account. Such is the economy of God in all His marvellous operations, in which there is not an atom lost, nor any energy expended in vain.

Wisdom is displayed by a mind which sees the end from the beginning, and so effectually provides for all possible events as to realize its object, despite all opposing influences. Such is the perfection of God's plan, and such the infallible certainty and efficiency of his arrangements.

The indications of wisdom are the more perfect and complete in proportion to the extent of the plan, the diversity and complicated nature of the operations to be performed, and the greatness of the exigencies to be provided for, in effecting a given result. The plan of the Almighty's works has no limits; His operations are infinitely diversified; exigencies without end have to be provided for; but Divine wisdom comprehends the whole, meets every exigency, and secures the ultimate fulfilment of all His purposes. If we look through the economy of Nature we shall see these features of wisdom illustrated in all God's works.—*W. Cooke, D.D.*

III. Its Special Manifestations.

1 In astronomical phenomena.

(1) *As seen in the system of the universe generally, and the glory of the heavenly bodies.*

[11037] As matter and its conformation result from the volition of Deity, it was optional with the Creator as to how He should dispose of it. He might conform the entire mass of matter into one vast world of uniform character, or He might distribute it into many worlds of various magnitude, invested with various and distinctive properties. A wise being, however, would select the best alternative—one the most accordant with utility and beneficence; such is the one actually existent. Had the entire mass of matter been formed into one immense globe, there would have been far less space than there is for the accommodation of sentient beings—a fact not in harmony with that wise economy which makes nothing in vain, but delights to render everything subservient to the best end. Besides, there would have been comparatively little variety to delight the eye or excite the admiration of the mind. It would be earth without any visible heavens. Instead of the glittering and gorgeous expanse around us, the firmament would have been vacant; the whole space around us being devoid of sun, moon, or stars; barren of every object to lead out the mind from itself into those varieties and infinitudes of being which are now spread out to our view. The formation, then, of innumerable worlds, instead of only one vast orb, is indicative of wisdom; affording a far more extended theatre of action for sentient existence, and unfolding a variety, a vastness, and an amplitude in creation, which at once display the magnificence and glory of the Creator, and stimulate the intellect, enlarge and exalt the mind of the creature.—*Ibid.*

[11038] About the time of the invention of the telescope another instrument was formed, which laid open a scene no less wonderful, and rewarded the inquisitive spirit of man with a discovery which serves to neutralize the whole of this argument. This was the microscope. The one led me to see a system in every star. The other leads me to see a world in every atom. The one taught me that this mighty globe, with the whole burden of its people, and of its countries, is but a grain of sand on the high fields of immensity. The other teaches me that every grain of sand may harbour within it the tribes and the families of a busy population. The one told me of the insignificance of the world I tread upon. The other redeems it from all its insignificance; for it tells me that in the leaves of every forest, and in the flowers of every garden, and in the waters of every rivulet, there are worlds teeming with life, and numberless as are the glories of the firmament. The one has suggested to me that, beyond and above all that is visible to man, there may be fields of creation which sweep immeasurably along and carry the impress of the Almighty's hand to the remotest scenes of the universe. The other suggests to me that within and beneath all that minuteness which the aided eye of man has been able to explore, there may be a region of invisibles; and that, could we draw aside the mysterious curtain which shrouds it from our senses, we might there see a theatre of as many wonders as astronomy has unfolded—a universe within the compass of a point so small, as to elude all the powers of the microscope, but where the wonder-working God finds room for the exercise of all His attributes, where He can raise another mechanism of worlds, and fill and animate them all with the evidences of His glory.—*Dr. Chalmers.*

[11039] The countless numbers, the immense distances, the prodigious magnitudes, and the regular movements of the heavenly bodies, present views of the might, the majesty, and the wisdom of the Supreme Being, such as overwhelm the mind with devout amazement. These

views have increased in clearness and extent, in proportion to the progress of science and of astronomical discovery. No faults or blemishes are ever detected; but, on the contrary, according as the researches of philosophy have extended, new causes of admiration have been ever presenting themselves, in every department of nature that has come under the cognizance of man.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

2 In the structure and general condition of the world.

[11040] The fact that man exists as the lord of this world, implies that the earth was made for him—specially adapted as a place for his habitation—as a theatre for the exercise and development of his powers. Ere he was brought into being, this fair world was prepared for his reception. Its mountains were reared, its valleys scooped, its ocean chained within appointed bounds; its rivers, like net-work, intersecting and fertilizing its bosom; its foundations built up of solid rocks, and enriched with metallic ores; its surface clothed with living verdure, stocked with vegetation, and replenished with endless forms of animal existence; its circumference enveloped with a transparent and life-sustaining atmosphere, garnished with a drapery of clouds, and enclosed with a canopy studded with gems, sparkling with the radiance of distant worlds. The wisdom which constructed this noble theatre from a heterogeneous mass, and postponed the creation of man until his habitation was thus prepared for his reception, may well challenge our admiration.—*W. Cooke, D.D.*

3 In the variety of creation's works.

[11041] The creation of a single being, or the production of a single event, furnishes a complete exhibition of the ideas existing in the creating mind, of which either is a copy, and in conformity to which each was brought into existence. A repetition of the same event, or the existence of a second being exactly resembling the first, would barely exhibit the same ideas a second time, and discover nothing new concerning the Creator. Hence were two or more beings or events exactly like each other to be brought into existence, none, except the first, would at all enlarge our conceptions of the mind by which they were effectuated. Every variety in beings or events is a new disclosure of the character, skill, and contrivance of the Creator, and, where we understand the end for which it exists, of His goodness also. For this, as one great reason, God undoubtedly has formed and conducted all things on the plan of universal variety. No two beings or events appear precisely alike. The leaves of trees, the blades of grass, and the particles of sand, as well as other more important and more complicated objects, exhibit, even to the naked eye, an endless diversity. This characteristic extends through the mineral, vegetable, and rational kingdoms, and throughout the whole progress of events. In every one of the individuals composing these may be seen something which is peculiar, and which, in a peculiar manner, unfolds the ideas, the contrivance, the wisdom of the Infinite Mind. As the diversity is literally boundless, so we are presented by it with a picture of the endlessly diversified views and conceptions of Him in whose mind all existed from the beginning. By this scheme of things a field is opened to intelligent beings for learning and understanding this glorious part of the Divine character. By the love of variety and novelty, which He has implanted in the minds of rational creatures, He has with the same wisdom prompted them voluntarily to an unceasing, unwearied, and delightful study of His works, which are only displays of Himself. Thus an effectual and most wise provision is made for our knowledge of the Divine character, on which alone is ultimately founded our admiration, reverence, love, and obedience. A virtuous mind, surveying this wonderful subject, can scarcely fail to exclaim, "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all."

[11042] What inextricable confusion must the world for ever have been in but for the variety which we find to obtain in the faces, the voices, and the handwriting of men! No security of person, or certainty of possession, no justice between man and man, no distinction between good and bad, friends and foes, father and child, husband and wife, male and female. All would have been exposed to malice, fraud, forgery, and lust. But now every man's face can distinguish him in the light, his voice in the dark, and his handwriting can speak for him though absent, and be his witness to all generations. Did this happen by chance, or is it not a manifest as well as an admirable indication of a Divine superintendence?—*Bp. Horne.*

[11043] Had the Creator abridged the variety of existence, He might have dispensed with much of that elaborate system that marks His operations. Had He created nothing higher than confervas and cryptogamic plants, and nothing higher than worms and molluscs among animals, organization would have been simple indeed; but Nature would have been left barren and vacant, compared with its present fecundity and fulness. To extend the variety so as to replenish the earth, the ocean, and the air with life, the species must be numerous and widely diversified in size, in form, in habit, and in instincts, to fit them for the varied conditions of life; and in order to meet these exigencies, the internal and external organization must be diversified; and the mind that contrived for all these varied exigencies displays, not its weakness, but its wisdom; not its imperfection, but its boundless resources.—*Wm. Cooke, D.D.*

4 In the phenomena of physiology.

(1) *As regards the principle of life and organization.*

[11044] The first and most essential distinction between mere matter and organic existence

is the principle of life. We will not perplex the reader with the different theories, ancient and modern, which, from the days of Aristoxenus and Lucretius to the present hour, have affected to explain the principle of life. The most elaborate and philosophical attempts to define and explain this mysterious principle, bring to the mind no clearer ideas of its nature than a popular view. They rather bewilder and obscure than explain and unfold. Yet we are assured there is life. We enjoy it ourselves by consciousness, we witness it in others by observation, and know that it is the attribute of plants as well as of animals. Though essential to intellect, sensation, and consciousness, and to all the attributes of mind, yet neither mind nor any of its attributes are absolutely essential to life, for it can exist without them—as, for example, in plants. Yet in its lowest form it is essentially distinct from dead matter, however modified and refined. It is as distinct from the galvanic fluid, from electricity, from the magnetic current, and the most subtle gases, as it is from a piece of adamant.—*Ibid.*

[11045] Kant defines organization "a product of nature in which all the parts are mutually ends and means." Hence, every part of an organized structure is necessarily indicative of wisdom; but when our view is extended to the boundless varieties of organized life, we are convinced that the resources of creative wisdom are boundless; they can have no limitation.

Every variety of life has an organization of its own, from which arise the numerous types of being, scientifically divided into classes, orders, genera, and species. The diversified forms of being are astounding. Botanical science has arranged and classified from eighty to a hundred thousand species of plants; new discoveries are continually increasing the number; and to these must be added the extinct species embedded in geological deposits. Zoology has numbered upwards of a thousand species of quadrupeds, five thousand species of birds, an equal number of fishes, a hundred thousand species of insects; while of reptiles, shell-fish, crustaceans, worms, radiates, zoophytes, and animalcules, the numerous species defy the industry of man to ascertain.

In these multifarious species, what diversity in size, from the miscroscopic plant to the gigantic pine, from the monad that finds a world in a drop of water to the iguanodon and the whale! What diversity in shape, in colours, in habits, in instincts, in physical conformation! The earth, the air, the ocean, are crowded with life, and the varieties of organization are as numerous as the conditions under which life is capable of subsisting. It is as if the Creator had called these endless varieties of being into existence for the purpose of displaying the inexhaustible opulence of His wisdom, of showing to His intelligent creatures that the resources of His knowledge and power are absolutely infinite.—*Ibid.*

5 In the phenomena of the human mind.

(1) *With special reference to the constitution of man as a moral agent.*

[11046] Although the mind, from its spirituality, exhibits fewer marks of contrivance than our physical organization, yet, from its nobler nature and higher attributes, it yields a more profound and impressive evidence of Divine wisdom. It is the possession of this that elevates human nature to a pre-eminent distinction, above the highest types of mere animal existence, and constitutes a resemblance to the Deity Himself. The slightest consideration of its powers reveals the fact that they were intended to serve a higher purpose than to provide for the wants and welfare of our physical nature; for the mind is capable of acquiring a knowledge of physical and abstract truths, of becoming enriched with treasures of wisdom, of being refined and ennobled with the possession of moral sentiments and high degrees of moral excellence.—*Ibid.*

[11047] God has made beings capable, with intelligence and choice, of coinciding and co-operating with Him in His own infinitely desirable and excellent purposes. They, with a distant but real resemblance to Himself, can know, love, hate, choose, reject, design, and act; and all this to great and good ends. Particularly, they are capable of understanding in some good degree His character, designs, dispensations, law, and government, and the glory and excellence discovered in them all. These also, and Him as the author of them, they are capable of regarding with wonder, vexation, and love. Him they are capable of worshipping and obeying. To each other, at the same time, they are able to extend every useful thought, every amiable affection, and every beneficent action, and can thus become the means of mutual improvement, worth, and happiness. In forming these beings, the wisdom of God is in many respects gloriously manifested. Particularly, as they are capable of being the subjects of real though finite benevolence, and of directing this disposition by their understanding to an unceasing variety of desirable and useful purposes; as they are capable of promoting their own excellence and enjoyment, and that of each other; as they are capable of knowing, loving, and glorifying Him, and of possessing the exalted worth and expansive happiness which result from all these as causes; and as immense multitudes of them actually do all the things which I have mentioned, so they can become, and do in fact become, delightful objects both of the benevolence and complacency of God. All these things also they can and will do in a never ceasing progress throughout eternity. In forming such agents, therefore, God has made for Himself a kingdom supremely glorious and divine; composed of subjects whom His eye regards with infinite complacency, to whom His hand is stretched out with eternal bounty; who, as a

vast mirror, reflect as the ocean reflects the splendour of the sun, the boundless beauty and glory of their Creator; and whom His voice with awful but delightful accents pronounce to be a work worthy of Jehovah.—*T. Dwight, LL.D.*

6 In the scheme of redemption.

[11048] Here is the most wonderful exhibition of wisdom that has come within the range of our knowledge. And we can hardly fancy the possibility of its being surpassed, if indeed of its being equalled. It is thus held up to our admiring contemplation in the book of God. It is the lesson of revelation; that for which revelation has been given, and without which it would, to us as sinners, lose all its interest and value. It is called "the wisdom of God." If there be any intended difference between "wisdom" and "prudence" (and I can hardly suppose the two words used without any distinction), perhaps it may lie in this, that wisdom chooses the best ends, and adopts the best means; and prudence is exercised in shunning everything which might, in any way or in any degree, interfere with, impede, embarrass, and hinder the operation of these means, in the working out of the great design. The use made of the word all, in "all wisdom and prudence," is quite peculiar to the Apostle Paul. When he uses it, and he uses it frequently, it is always for the purpose of expressing the greatest degree of whatever he happens to be speaking of. In the former passage there are two, and in the latter four occurrences of it. It is emphatically appropriate in the instance before us. In the second of the two passages from the Epistle to the Ephesians, we have "the manifold wisdom of God" as made known to the angels by God's plans for the redemption and salvation of His church. So numberless had been the manifestations of wisdom that had come under the eye and contemplation of these heavenly intelligences, that they might have been tempted to think it had exhausted its resources, that they had witnessed it in all its possible varieties. But no! There remained yet one transcendent exhibition of the "manifold wisdom," which should more than ever satisfy them of the inexhaustibleness of its resources, of the infinitude of its versatility. This exhibition, throwing all that preceded it into shade, is found in the incarnation and work of Christ, in the work of man's redemption.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

IV. God's Knowledge and Wisdom distinguished.

[11049] I come now to speak of those properties and perfections which relate to the Divine understanding, and will, and manner, and power of acting. Knowledge considers things absolutely, and in themselves; wisdom considers the respects and relations of things one to another, and under the notion of means and ends. The knowledge of God is a perfect comprehension of the nature of all things, with all their powers, and qualities, and circumstances; the wisdom of God is a perfect comprehension of the respects and relations of things one to another; of their harmony and opposition; of their fitness and unfitness to such and such ends. The knowledge of God only implies His bare understanding of things; but His wisdom implies the skill of ordering and disposing things to the best ends and purposes, to make everything, and to govern and administer all things in number, weight and measure.—*Abp. Tillotson.*

17

JUSTICE.

I. Definition and Nature of the Divine Justice.

[11050] Justice in general is the giving every one their due. In God it is that attribute whereby He disposeth all things according to the rule of equity (Deut. xxxii. 4; Psa. xi. 5), and rendereth to every man according to his works, without respect of persons (Psa. lxii. 12; Job xxxiv. 11, 19; Cant. vi. 6, 7). God is positively or affirmatively just (Zeph. iii. 5); He is eminently the Just One (Acts vii. 52); He is superlatively most just (Job xxxiv. 17). Wilt thou condemn Him that is most just? or, as some read it, justice—justice, without the least mixture, tincture, or shadow of injustice: all over just and justice . . . He giveth to all their due, without fear of evil—He standeth in awe of none for their power or greatness; His day of vengeance is against the cedars of Lebanon, and the oaks of Bashan, and all the high mountains (Isa. ii. 13, 14), without hope of gain; men are unjust for bribes (Hosea iv. 14), and love with shame give ye; but riches prevail not in the day of His wrath (Prov. xi. 4; Ezek. vii. 19). He is no taker of gifts (2 Chron. xix. 7), and without respect to any, in their honours or outward excellences (Jer. xxii. 24). He will pluck the signet from His right hand in the day of His justice. Israel were a people near to Him (Deut. iv. 7; Psa. cxlviii. 14), yet He doth not spare them when they rebel against Him (Psa. lxxiv. 1–3; xliv. 10–14; Jer. vii. 12). . . . Adam and angels were great and excellent beings, yet when they sinned He made them to suffer. He "accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor" (Job xxxiv. 19). Men *may* do justly, God *must* do justly.—*Swinnock.*

[11051] In the reign of King Edward the First there was much abuse in the traffic of all sorts of drapery, much wrong done betwixt man and man by reason of the diversity of their measures, every man measuring his cloth by his own yard; which the king perceiving, being a goodly proper man, took a long stick in his

hand, and having taken the length of his own arm, made proclamation throughout the kingdom that ever after the length of that stick should be the measure to measure by, and no other. Thus God's justice is nothing else but a conformity to His being, the pleasure of His will; so that the counsel of His will is the standard of His justice, whereunto all men should regulate themselves as well in commutative as distributive justice, and so much the more righteous than his neighbour shall every man appear, by how much he is proximate in this rule, and less righteous as he is the more remote.—*Spencer*, 1658.

II. Its Distinctive Aspects.

1 Divine justice is distinguished from righteousness and wrath.

[11052] There is a distinction between righteousness and justice; righteousness being a character grounded in the absolute, unconditioned law of right existing before government, and justice being a politico-rectoral, judicial character, maintained by the firm vindication of government, conditioned, of course, by the wants of government. Second, the distinction between the wrath-principle and justice; the wrath-principle being only that moral sensibility or passion that impels a moral nature to the infliction of evil in redress of wrong, and steels it against the restraints of false pity; and justice being, in the administration, a due infliction of such evil, according to the ill desert of the wrong. By the first distinction, righteousness is seen to be absolute, and justice to be a matter only of means to ends, and so of deliberative counsel. By the second, the wrath-principle is seen to be no law at all, but only an impulse to be regulated by counsel; which, when it is, makes justice; when it falls short, laxity; when it runs to excess, revenge and cruelty. I have the same kind of ethical nature as God, and it is even a praise in me, nay, an obligation upon me, to do my enemy better than he deserves—to forget my injuries, and even suffer for his good. Is it then a fault in God that He does the same? It is very true that I administer no government over my enemy, and so far there is a difference. But this difference leaves it optional with God to do by His enemy still better than he deserves, whenever He can do it, without injury to the public interest of government. And if that is agreed, where is the absolute, all-conditioning, unconditioned justice-element of His nature—the wrath that is to bridle and bestride everlastingly His will and counsel? Ceasing in this manner to call righteousness justice, and justice wrath, the claim that wrath is God's first attribute is seen to be quite groundless.—*H. Bushnell, D.D.*

2 Divine justice in punishments is distinguished from mere abhorrence of evil.

[11053] Abhorrence is a word of recoil simply and not a word of majesty. There is no enforcement, no judicial vigour in it. I may abhor what I am only too weak, or too much in the way of false pity, to handle with the due severity. It does not even require a perfect being to abhor sin, especially in the wicked forms of it—that is to draw back from it, as being disgusted and shocked by it. But there is no such drawing back in justice. Justice moves on in the positive vigour of the wrath-principle, girded with inflexible majesty, for the doing upon wrong of what wrong deserves. To put forward an expression therefore of God's abhorrence to sin, as a substitute for justice, is to give it the weakest possible substitute. If the abhorrence could be shown keeping company with justice and justice with it, there would be no deficiency; but to make a governmental sanction out of abhorrence by itself, and publish a free forgiveness to sin, on the ground of it, is to make forgiveness safe by a much less positive and weaker way of handling than forgiveness itself. All doubt on this point ought to be for ever ended by simply asking what kind of figure, as regards efficiency, any government of the world would make, dropping off its punishments and substituting abhorrences?—*Ibid.*

III. Its Manifestations.

1 In remunerative distribution of rewards.

[11054] God does not reward the works and godly actions of men as meritorious in themselves, but as they are the fruits of His own grace; who works in them both to will and to do of His own pleasure; and therefore He is not unrighteous to forget their work and labour of love, which springs from love, is done in faith, and with a view to His glory (Heb. vi. 10). Moreover, the works according to which God renders eternal life, are not men's own personal works, between which and eternal life there is no proportion; but the works of righteousness done by Christ, of which His obedience and righteousness consist, and which, being done by Him on their account, as their head and representative, are reckoned to them; and, according to these, the crown of righteousness is given them by the Lord, as a righteous Judge, in a way of righteousness (2 Tim. iv. 8).—*Rev. John Gill, M.A.*

[11055] God's justice would be glorified undoubtedly in my condemnation, but in my salvation *every* attribute is glorified. The very attribute that seemed to shut me out is the very one that welcomes me in.—*J. H. Evans.*

2 In primitive and vindictive equity.

[11056] It is a righteous thing with God to render tribulation to them that trouble His people (2 Thess. i. 6), and so to inflict punishment for any other sin committed by men; and this has been exercised by Him in all ages from the beginning of the world; and has appeared in casting down from heaven to hell the angels that sinned; in drowning the old world; in destroying Sodom and Gomorrah; in the plagues on Egypt, on Pharaoh and his host;

the righteousness of which was acknowledged, in some of the instances of it, by that wicked king (Exod. ix. 27), in the several captivities of the Jews, and in the destruction of that people; and in the judgments of God on many other nations, in several periods of time; and as will be seen in the destruction of antichrist and the antichristian states; the righteousness of which will be ascribed to God by the angel of the waters, and by all His people (Rev. xvi. 5, 6, and xix. 1, 2), and in the eternal punishment and everlasting destruction of ungodly men: and this righteousness is natural and essential to God; but this the Socinians deny, because they do not choose to embrace the doctrine of the necessity of Christ's satisfaction for sin, which, if granted, they must give in to. But that punitive or vindictive justice is essential to God, or that He not only will not let sin go unpunished, but that He cannot but punish sin, is manifest—(1) From the light of nature: hence the accusations of the natural conscience in men for sins committed; the fears of Divine vengeance falling upon them for it, here or hereafter; the many ways and means devised to appease angry Deity and to avert punishment, some absurd, and others shocking: to which may be added the name of δικη, vengeance, or justice, punitive justice, the heathens give to deity (see Rom. ii. 14, 15; Acts xxviii. 4). (2) From the Word of God, and the proclamation which God Himself has made; in which, among other essential perfections of His, this is one—that He will by no means clear the guilty, and not at all acquit the wicked (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; Num. xiv. 18; Nahum i. 3). (3) From the nature of God, "who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;" cannot bear it, but hates it, and the workers of it; which hatred is no other than His punishment of it (Heb. i. 13; Isa. i. 13, 14).—*Rev. John Gill, M.A.*

[11057] Slow goes the hand of justice, like the shadow on the sun-dial; ever moving, yet creeping slowly on, with a motion all but imperceptible. Still stand in awe. The hand of justice has not stopped. Although imperceptible, it steadily advances; by and by it reaches the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth hour. And now the bell strikes. Then, unless you have fled to Christ, the blow, which was so slow to fall, shall descend over the head of impenitence with accumulated force.—*Dr. Guthrie.*

[11058] It may be presumed the province of justice extends throughout all the stages of animal life; but though we can find no use for her proceeding to settle accounts of former behaviour unless we knew the transactions of this life were remembered exactly in the next, yet the provisions of nature seem to indicate that the same event shall follow as if there were an impartial and rigorous reckoning. For the habits and acquisitions we get here, being preparatives to fit us for our several functions hereafter, though we leave the habits and acquisitions themselves behind, and enter into our new being a blank paper, yet they must have worked such an alteration in our texture and constitution as shall give us an aptness to renew the old courses by which we first acquired them. So that the wicked will carry with him an obduracy of temper, productive of actions obnoxious to severer punishments than any executed upon him here; and the righteous a pliancy of nature obedient to the command of reason, which will lead him to merit more glorious rewards than he ever earned here. And the degree of either will correspond exactly to the course of life they have respectively followed in their present state. Nor do I see anything that should hinder, but that the obduracy may have grown so strong in some as to render them incapable of being touched unless by the extremity of suffering: so that they will continue always objects of vengeance, and always serve as an example and warning to the rest of their compatriots.—*Abraham Tucker, D.D.*

IV. Nature of the Harmony subsisting between Divine Justice and Divine Mercy.

[11059] There is a just God over all, for men ever reap just what they sow. But justice in God is something far grander than the mere exercise of retribution; it is the love of eternal truth, purity, righteousness: and the penalties of untruth, impurity, unrighteousness are the outflashings of that holy anger which is founded in His love of the right, the pure, and the true. In the same way God's salvation is more than the mere deliverance from penalty. It *is* a deliverance from penalty; it *is* a salvation from the miseries of sin, and the agonies inflicted on the soul by the remorse of conscience. But it is at the same time far greater than this; it is the deliverance from evil, salvation from the cruel lusts of wrong; from the bondage of unholy passions growing into the giant-life of eternity; from the deep degradation and horrible selfishness of sin. That is the salvation of God. Here, then, we see how His justice and His salvation are in perfect harmony. His salvation is to free men from the penalties of justice by making them righteous, true, and holy in Christ. And thus the purpose of God the Saviour is to change men into the image of God the Just. His justice is not merely a holy anger against all the violations of truth, and righteousness, and purity, but a deep desire to make men like Himself, just, and holy, and true. In a word, God would save men from evil by making them righteous; and thus He is at once the just God and the Saviour.—*Rev. E. T. Hill, B.A.*

[11060] The just God was in the Saviour. There was no reconciliation of God to Himself; no endeavour made in fearful woe to silence eternal justice. It was the sacrifice of the Son who was one with the father, and who honoured His righteous will. Beneath the cross we read

that God would not pardon without glorifying to its utmost limit the majesty of the just and holy law. . . . Mark now the consummate power of Christ crucified; but what is it but a power rousing men to be holy as God is holy? Sin never was so slain as by Him whom sin slew. The law never was so attested as by Him who bore its penalty. There in His death we have a revelation of sin in all its hideous power; its defiance, in the men who gambled for his garments; its fury, in the cry of the crowd; its degradation, in the men who procured His doom. I ask, what means it all, but God the Just winning man to righteousness by the love of the Saviour? God the Saviour winning men to holiness by the agony of a death that shed forth the influence of His perfect life. In Christ, then, we see the "just God and a Saviour;" His justice desiring to make men like Himself; His salvation glorifying the righteousness from which men had gone astray.—*Ibid.*

[11061] For what is more just than for the righteous to receive good and the wicked evil? How, therefore, is it just that Thou shouldst punish, and just that Thou shouldst spare the wicked. Dost Thou in one sense justly punish the wicked, and in another sense justly spare? For when Thou dost punish the wicked, it is just, because this corresponds with their deserts; but when Thou dost spare, it is just—not because it corresponds with their deserts, but because it is becoming Thy goodness. In sparing the wicked, Thou art just according to what is suitable to Thee, but not according to what is deserved by us; in the same manner as Thou art compassionate in the sense of relieving us, but not in the sense of changing Thee. For as in saving us whom Thou mightest justly destroy, Thou art compassionate, not because Thou art changed by compassion, but because we feel its effect; so also Thou art just, not as rendering unto us that which is due, but as doing that which is becoming Thy nature who art supremely good. Thus, therefore, without any contradiction, Thou dost justly punish, and justly spare the wicked.—*St. Anselm.*

V. Arguments in Support of the Doctrine of Divine Justice as an Attribute of God distinct from Benevolence.

1 Argument from St. Paul's teaching.

[11062] The whole argument of the apostle in his Epistle to the Romans is founded on the principle that justice is a Divine attribute distinct from benevolence. His argument is: God is just. All men are sinners. All, therefore, are guilty, *i.e.*, under condemnation. Therefore no man can be justified, *i.e.*, pronounced not guilty, on the ground of his character and conduct. Sinners cannot satisfy justice; but what they could not do, Christ, the eternal Son of God, clothed in our nature, has done for them. He has brought in everlasting righteousness, which meets all the demands of the law. All those who renounce their own righteousness and trust to the righteousness of Christ, God justifies and saves. This is the gospel as preached by Paul. It rests on the assumption that God is just.—*Dr. Hodge.*

2 Argument from the holiness of God.

[11063] The truth of this doctrine may be inferred from the holiness of God. If He is infinitely pure, His nature must be opposed to all sin; and as His acts are determined by His nature, His disapprobation of sin must manifest itself in His acts. But the disfavour of God, the manifestation of His disapprobation, is death, as His favour is life. It cannot be that this essential opposition between holiness and sin should be dependent for its manifestation on the mere *ab extra* consideration that evil would result from sin being allowed to go unpunished. It might as well be said that we should feel no aversion to pain, unless aware that it weakened our constitution. We do not approve of holiness simply because it tends to produce happiness; neither do we disapprove of sin simply because it tends to produce misery. It is inevitable, therefore, that the perfection of the infinitely holy God should manifest its opposition to sin, without waiting to judge of the consequences of the expression of this Divine repugnance.—*Ibid.*

3 Argument from the connection between sin and misery.

[11064] The inseparable connection between sin and misery is a revelation of the justice of God. That holiness promotes happiness is a revelation of the relation in which God stands to holiness; and that sin produces misery is no less a revelation of the relation in which He stands to moral evil. This constitution of things depending on the nature and will of God, proves that sin is evil in its own nature, and is punished for its own sake. The law of God, which includes a penalty as well as precepts, is in both a revelation of the nature of God. If the precepts manifest His holiness, the penalty as clearly manifests His justice. If the one is immutable, so also is the other. The wages of sin is death. Death is what is due to it in justice, and what without injustice cannot be withheld from it. If the prevention of crime were the primary end of punishment, then if the punishment of the innocent, the execution, for example, of the wife and children of a murderer, would have a greater restraining influence than the punishment of the guilty murderer, their execution would be just. But this would shock the moral sense of men.—*Ibid.*

4 Argument from the Scriptural doctrines of satisfaction and justification.

[11065] The scriptural doctrines of satisfaction and justification rest on the principle that God is immutably just, *i.e.*, that his moral excellence, in the case of sin, demands punishment, or expiation. The Bible clearly teaches the necessity of satisfaction to justice in order to

the forgiveness of sin. Christ was set forth as a propitiation, in order that God might be just in justifying the ungodly. This assumes that it would be unjust, *i.e.*, contrary to moral rectitude, to pardon the guilty without such a propitiation. This necessity for a satisfaction is never referred to expediency or to governmental considerations. If sin could have been pardoned without a satisfaction, the apostle says, Christ is dead in vain (Gal. ii. 21). If there could have been a law which could have given life, salvation would have been by the law (Gal. iii. 21).

Moreover, if there is no such attribute in God as justice, as distinguished from benevolence, there can be no such thing as justification. There may be pardon, as the act of a sovereign remitting a penalty and restoring an offender to favour; but no such thing as justification, as an act of a judge proceeding according to law and pronouncing the demands of justice satisfied. —*Ibid.*

5 Argument from the religious experience of believers.

[11066] This sense of justice, which is indestructible in the nature of man, and which, in common with reason and conscience, has survived the fall, is not only revealed in the ordinary experience of men, but still more distinctly in their religious consciousness. What is commonly called "conviction of sin" is only a modification, and higher form, of those inward experiences which are common to all men. All men know that they are sinners. They all know that sin, as related to the justice of God, is guilt, that which ought to be punished; and that, as related to His holiness, it renders us polluted and offensive in His sight. They also know, intuitively, that God is just as well as holy; and therefore that His moral perfection calls for the punishment of sin, by the same necessity by which He disapproves of and hates it. Under the pressure of these convictions, and the consciousness of their utter inability either to satisfy Divine justice, or to free themselves from the defilement and power of sin, men either tremble in the constant looking for of judgment, or they look out of themselves for help.—*Ibid.*

VI. The Deference paid by Christ to the Instituted Justice of God.

[11067] Let us not fail now to observe the deliberate respect He pays to God's instituted government and law in this matter. First, that having all miraculous power, and using that power continually for the removal of diseases, and sometimes even for the quickening of the dead, He steadily refuses to use it for the rescue of His person when arrested; or the confounding of his adversaries when arraigned; or even to so much as hurl aside the cross and His crucifiers. "No, let sin be just as evil and wild as it will; society just as cruel to all that are in it, Me included; just as visibly accursed, as the retributive order of God's causes requires it to be." And again, secondly, observe that, when He has all power to stop the retributive causes, and strip away the whole instituted order of justice, He will not do it—will not annihilate or suspend, or in the least infringe, any single attribute of causation arranged for the moral discipline of transgression. As He will not discontinue any law of nature by His miracles, He will not do it for the deliverance of a soul, which in fact is much less than a miracle. He is a being strictly supernatural, and His work in the deliverance of transgressors is also supernatural; but in coming to them, in their thraldom, to lift them out by His Divine love and sympathy, He only masters the bad causes, but does not stop them. It could as well be imagined that a strong magnet, lifting its iron weight into the air, discontinues or annihilates the law of gravity. Nothing, in short, is so conspicuous, in the vicarious suffering and death of Christ, as the solemn deference He pays to God's instituted justice in the world, and even to the causes which He comes to redeem.—*H. Bushnell, D.D.*

VII. Distorted Ideas of Divine Justice.

[11068] Not only every sect, but every individual is apt to modify the general attributes of Deity towards assimilation with his own character; the just man dwells on the justice, the stern man upon the wrath; the attributes which do not please the worshipper he insensibly forgets. The pious vanity of man makes him adore his own qualities under pretence of worshipping those of his God.—*Lord Lytton.*

[11069] Take a straight stick, and put it into the water, then it will seem crooked. Why? Because we look at it through two mediums, air and water: there lies the deception, thence it is that we cannot discern aright. Thus the proceedings of God, in His justice, which in themselves are straight without the least obliquity, seem unto us crooked. That wicked men should prosper, and good men be afflicted; that the Israelites should make the bricks, and Egyptians dwell in the houses; that servants should ride on horseback, and princes go on foot; these are the things that make the best Christians stagger in their judgment. And why, but because they look upon God's proceedings through a double medium of flesh and spirit, that so all things seem to go cross, though indeed they go right enough; and hence it is that God's proceedings in His justice are not so well discerned, the eyes of man alone not being competent judges thereof.—*Spencer*, 1658.

[11070] All ideas of Divine justice become distorted unless due allowance be made for the following consideration: (1) that there is an abnormal state of things through the introduction of sin; (2) that the present order of events is of a disciplinarian character; (3) that the way of redemption is remedial; (4) that hereafter there will be restitution of all things; (5) that we see through a glass darkly.—*C. N.*

18

FAITHFULNESS.

I. The Manifestations of God's Faithfulness.

1 In the fulfilling of all His promises.

(1) *Generally considered.*

[11071] His faithfulness relates to His engagements, and is confirmed to us with the same certainty as His veracity. If He enters into engagements, promises, and covenants, He acts with perfect freedom. These are acts of grace to which He is under no compulsion; and they can never, therefore, be reluctant engagements which He would wish to violate, because they flow from a ceaseless and changeless inclination to bestow benefits, and a delight in the exercise of goodness. They can never be made in haste or unadvisedly; for the whole case of His creatures to the end of time is before Him, and no circumstances can arise which to Him are new or unforeseen. He cannot want the power to fulfil His promises, because He is omnipotent; He cannot promise beyond His ability to make good, because His fulness is infinite; finally, "He cannot deny Himself," because "He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent;" and thus every promise which He has made is guaranteed, as well by His natural attributes of wisdom, power, and sufficiency, as by His perfect moral rectitude. In this manner the true God stands contrasted with the "lying vanities" of the heathen deities; and, in this His character of truth, the everlasting foundations of His religion are laid. That changes not, because the doctrines taught in it are in themselves true without error, and can never be displaced by new and better discoveries; it fails not, because every gracious promise must by Him be accomplished; and thus the religion of the Bible continues from age to age, and from day to day, as much a matter of personal experience as it ever was. In its doctrines, it can never become an antiquated theory; for truth is eternal. In its practical application, it can never become foreign to man; for it enters now, and must ever enter, into his concerns, his duties, his hopes, and comforts, to the end of time. We know what is true as an object of belief, because the God of truth has declared it; and we know what is faithful, and, therefore, the object of unlimited trust, because "He is faithful that hath promised." Whether, therefore, in the language of the old divines, we consider God's Word as "declaratory, or promissory"—declaring "how things are or how they shall be," or promising to us certain benefits—its absolute truth is confirmed to us by the truth of the Divine nature itself; it claims the undivided assent of our judgment, and the unsuspicious trust of our hearts; and presents, at once, a sure resting-place for our opinions, and a faithful object for our confidence.—*Rev. Richard Watson.*

(2) *Specially considered.*

a. As regards His succour in temptation.

[11072] When the tempter has taken us unawares, when he has thrown into our hearts a doubt, a thought, a passion which trouble us, what are his habitual tactics? To make us see in God an angry Judge who repulses us, to shut us off from approaches to Him who alone could tear us from his embraces. Do not let us believe him; and, in that strife which engages us, let us count on God as on a helper who runs to our aid. Pressed by the enemy, harassed, half vanquished, there is still time to believe, to pray, and to conquer. Inspire an army, hitherto weak and demoralized, with a steadfast confidence in its general, make it believe that he possesses genius enough to discern all the wiles of the enemy, to counteract all his stratagems, that he is as foreseeing as skilful, and that, into whatever place he leads it, it will find in abundance all that is necessary; I say that nothing could arrest such men, and that the moral ardour which animates them is already the half of success. All great captains have well understood this; and the greatest of all, in his famous proclamations, showed to his soldiers the enemy already conquered before even having come up to them. Well, in the strife which we maintain against evil, God wills that we turn our looks to Him, that we draw our strength from Him, and that to all the doubts, to all the attacks, to all the failings of our heart, we should reply with this cry of victory: "The Lord is faithful!" Also see how numerous and magnificent the declarations of Scripture are which testify to us the firmness, the perseverance, the final victory of His love. The most vivid and strongest images which can express the love which nothing wearies, are employed in turn: it is the mother who cannot forget her sucking child, the husband who keeps and sustains her he has chosen, the shepherd who carries in his arms the sheep he has found again, the God who calls and who saves, who begins and who finishes; the God who gives the will and the power, who in temptation finds a way out, who works with us and acts in us.—*Eugène Bersier, D.D.*

[11073] There are days when all our cowardice, all our passions, all our unbeliefs rise up before us, as if to shut us off from approaching the higher life; days when the tempter caused to pass before our eyes true holiness, disinterested love, all those good things to which our soul aspires, as a promised land which remains for ever closed to us, and when he murmurs in our ear these sneering words: "Thou shalt never enter therein." There are days when the final victory seems impossible, so much is the power of evil bound up with our being, so much is our nature still earthly and carnal, so much is our incurable weakness incapable of one heroic effort. It is then we must remember that the promises of God are sure, that He will never leave His work interrupted like an unskilful workman, that with the temptation He will

provide a way out of it, and that if the battle is long and bloody, the final victory is His.—*Ibid.*

b. As regards His protection of the whole man.

[11074] The faithfulness of God is represented by the apostle as extending to the whole man, to "body," to "soul," and to "spirit," which are all said to be "preserved blameless." The entire of our feeble humanity is sheltered under this canopy of Divine protection. The "body" is subdued into its place as humble minister to the soul; the "soul" is guarded from its own special corruptions; and the "spirit"—the element that, given from heaven, is still nearest to heaven—is preserved undecayed amid a hostile world. Here is a defence for this triple nature of man. And, of a surety, the mystic Trinity that occupies the throne of heaven will not forget this humble image of their ineffable mystery (for so the divines of old time were wont to regard it), which the apostle has thus assigned to our inferior being! Surely the "soul" will be preserved by that creative Deity who first infused it into the frame; the "body" by that eternal Son who was pleased to assume it; and the "spirit" by that ever-blessed Spirit who Himself bestows it, and well may guard His own inestimable gift!—*Wm. Archer Butler, M.A.*

[11075] This is not the least wondrous circumstance in the unalterable faithfulness of God, that it is a fidelity to His own gracious engagement. He calls, and He is faithful to His own merciful calling; He summons the heart to Himself, and He adheres to His own voluntary summons; He, without destroying human freedom or human responsibility, of His free grace, commences, continues, and ends the whole Christian work. Yet, so "faithful" is this His profound compassion, that He represents Himself as bound and tied to the impulses of His own unconstrained mercy. There is no bond but His own love, yet that bond is stronger than iron; and He, whom the universe cannot compel, commands Himself!—*Ibid.*

2 In the accomplishing of all His threatenings.

[11076] A few years more (to many far fewer years than they have already passed), and the crisis shall at last arrive which shall determine, by terrible proofs, the awful faithfulness of God. A day shall come when every wavering half believer shall learn how truly it was "the god of this world" that "blinded" him in that half belief! At that hour, that inflexible faithfulness, which forms the rock of his salvation to the redeemed one's heart, shall assume, to the God-despiser, the terrible form of an inflexible curse. The permanence of God's character is the very warrant of his doom, and the seal of its eternity. It is a profound and impressive remark of Bishop Butler that the most formidable of all God's attributes to the wicked is His goodness; "malice," observes the sage, "may be wearied or satiated; caprice may change; but goodness is a steady, inflexible principle of action." The very same attributes which (like the pillar in the wilderness) present to the saved a side of light and protection, shall present (themselves unchanged) to the lost a gloomy apparition of clouds and darkness. The justice that acquits the believer in the blood of the sacrifice, shall condemn the despiser of that blood. The goodness that shelters the beloved children in the bowers of Paradise, shall (to us mysteriously but truly) abandon to his punishment the guilty, for the benefit of the universe. The wisdom that is shown in contriving salvation shall be "justified of her children" in condemnation also. The power that framed a heaven for the blessed shall be revealed more awfully still in the structure of the abodes of misery.—*Ibid.*

3 In His natural works.

[11077] The Lord is faithful! Has not God written that thought in all His works? Does it not obviously appear to us in creation? Do we not, each spring, read it on the face of the renewed earth? When, after the long silence of winter, we see the trees laden with verdure, the flowers coming out of the ground as fresh as the dew, numerous as the sand of the seas, more brilliant than the purple of Solomon in his glory, when all the voices of nature enchant our senses, do we not hear them proclaim the faithfulness of God? Alas! we can count on that faithfulness, and unworthily not recognize its source! That peasant who, perhaps, has never bent the knee before God, who blasphemes brutally His name, turns up the ground, confides to its furrows the grain he has stored up; and when the soil, hardened by winter, is covered with a coating of ice, he awaits the future with confidence. The atheist has seen the spring this year reborn without being surprised at it; he believes that the harvest, ripened in turns by the rain and the rays of the sun, will come out of the earth. He who denies the sovereign Ordainer, believes in universal order in nature; and if he possesses a vast extent of land, he judges that his fortune is better secured than if he trusted it to the chances of his most clever speculations. The scientist calculates with extreme precision what he calls the laws of nature; he counts so on their exactitude that a thousand years beforehand he announces the hour and the minute when two stars will meet in space. Everything, in our works, in our projects, in our plans for the future, rests on the confidence that what God has done until now, He will do again; everything in our life proclaims instinctively the faithfulness of God.—*Eugène Bersier, D.D.*

4 In His moral government.

[11078] I can conceive of a world where the law of gravity might not exist; the properties of bodies might have no relation to the Divine essence; God might change them so that nothing in us would protest;—but a world where, by the

will of God, evil would be good, a world where falsehood would be of the same value as truth, a world where selfishness would have the same value as love! I cannot suppose it without tearing my conscience in two, without destroying the very roots of my being. Everything tells me that the moral law must receive its accomplishment; and if in spring-time I believe that the seed buried in the soil must appear, I still more firmly believe that, according to the solemn words of the apostle, man does not mock God, and what the sinner has sown he shall also reap. That is so evident, so necessary, that it will be easily granted us, and, in a general sense, every one will be in unison with us; but shall I astonish you, brethren, in saying that this truth is not taken seriously? On what do the confidence and the peace of the greater part of men rest?—I do not speak of gross unbelievers—I speak of many of those who believe themselves to be Christians, of several who are listening to me. Is it not on the idea that God is never exacting, that His justice is never rigorous, that our weaknesses do not touch Him? That is the miserable scaffolding on which we dare to build our peace. God is never exacting! And who told us so? Sinners interested in believing it, beings like you, like me, who all have decisive reasons for dreading the judgment of the Holy God. Would you allow the criminal to witness in his own cause? Would you ask him to pronounce his own verdict? Ah! brethren, let us be serious, do not let us abase God by making an unworthy idea of Him, under the pretext that He is good. God is faithful to Himself—that is to say, that He cannot give the lie to His holiness; that is that, according to His eternal, immutable laws, sin must entail chastisement and suffering, and that rebellion in the present time must entail condemnation in the time to come.—*Ibid.*

II. The Intimate Communion between God and Man implied in this Attribute.

[11079] Christianity is a "ministry of reconciliation," the restoration of a broken bond. Now in every perfect union there must be mutual confidence, and a strict fulfilment of engagements on both sides. If man be trustful, God must be "faithful." In this great contract there must be in God a something that will answer to the faith that is in His humble follower. And in affirmation of this—to show that there is indeed a perfection in the Deity, correspondent to the grace He gives, to make the union complete, to leave nothing imperfect—the apostle, at the very time that he declares that man is "justified by faith," also reiterates (as if to show that God also, in another sense, shall one day be "justified" by His preservation of faith to man) that "the Lord is faithful," that "God is faithful," or, as in the text, that "faithful is He that calleth you." Thus faith in man and faithfulness in God are the two members of one spiritual harmony. Neither is to be conceived without the other. Man, without God, would be fatherless; and God has almost permitted us to say that, without His people (the "little children" whom He wills not "to perish"), He would Himself be, as it were, childless in His own celestial family!—*Wm. Archer Butler, M.A.*

[11080] The highest object of man's existence is undoubtedly to hold communion with his God. For this his nature was originally framed, and in this alone will his nature ever find contentment or repose. God is, as it were, the counterpart to his being; the divine and human elements are fitted to each other; and humanity, without the corresponding principle of Deity, is a thing imperfect, insufficient, incomplete. This it is that makes human life such an enigma; this it is that has perplexed the speculative, and maddened the misanthropic.—*Ibid.*

19

TRUTH.

I. Significance of Divine Truth.

[11081] Truth is a word of frequent occurrence and of wide signification in the Bible. The primary meaning of the Greek word ἀλήθεια (from ἀ and λήθω) is openness; what is not concealed. But in the Hebrew, and therefore in the Bible, the primary idea of truth is, that which sustains, which does not fail or disappoint our expectations. The true, therefore, is (1) that which is real, as opposed to that which is fictitious or imaginary. Jehovah is the true God, because He is really God, while the gods of the heathen are vanity and nothing, mere imaginary beings, having neither existence nor attributes. (2) The true is that which completely comes up to its idea, or to what it purports to be. A true man is a man in whom the idea of manhood is fully realized. The true God is He in whom is found all that Godhead imports. (3) The true is that in which the reality exactly corresponds to the manifestation. God is true, because He really is what He declares Himself to be; because He is what He commands us to believe Him to be; and because all His declarations correspond to what really is. (4) The true is that which can be depended upon, which does not fail, or change, or disappoint. In this sense also God is true as He is immutable and faithful. His promise cannot fail; His word never disappoints. His word abideth forever. When our Lord says, "Thy word is Truth," He says that all that God has revealed may be confided in as exactly corresponding to what really is, or is to be. His word can never fail, though heaven and earth pass away.—*Dr. C. Hodge.*

[11082] The apostle says, "Let God be true, and every man a liar" (Rom. iii. 4). This must be affirmed of Him; whatever is said of crea-

tures, He is true, and truth itself. 1. God is true in and of Himself: this epithet or attribute is expressive:—1. Of the reality of His being; He truly and really exists: this is what every worshipper of Him must believe (Heb. xi. 6). Creatures have but a shadow of being in comparison of His; "Every man walks in a vain show," or image; rather in appearance than in reality (Psa. xxxix. 6). But the existence of God is true, real, and substantial; hence He has the name Jehovah, I Am that I Am; which denotes the truth, eternity, and immutability of His essence. What seems to be, and is not, is not true; what seems to be, and is, is true. 2. Of the truth of His Deity; He is the true and living God; so He is often called (2 Chron. xv. 3; Jer. x. 10; 1 Thess. i. 9) in opposition to fictitious deities; who either have feigned themselves such, or are feigned so by others; gods only by name, not by nature; of which there have been many: but the true God is but one, and in distinction from such who are called gods in a figurative and metaphorical sense, gods by office under God; as Moses was to Pharaoh, and as kings, judges, and civil magistrates be (Exod. vii. 1; Psa. lxxxii. 1–7). But the Lord is God in a true and proper sense. 3. This title includes the truth and reality of all His perfections; He is not only omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, eternal, and immutable, but He is truly so: what is falsely claimed by others, or wrongly given to them, is really in Him; He is not only good and gracious, holy and just, but He is truly so; what others only appear to be He is really. 4. This may be predicated of each Person in the Godhead; the Father is the only true God (John xvii. 3), though not to the exclusion of the Son, who is also the true God and eternal life; nor of the Holy Spirit, who is truth; and who, with the Father and the Son, is the one true and living God (1 John v. 20, vi. 7.) This attribute of truth removes from the Divine nature every thing imperfect and sinful: it is opposed to unrighteousness (Deut. xxxii. 4), and has the epithet of just or holy along with it, when God is spoken of in His persons, ways, and works (Rev. iii. 7; vi. 10, xv. 3, xvi. 7, and xix. 2). It removes from Him all imputation of lying and falsehood; He is not a man, that He should lie, as men do; the Strength of Israel will not lie; yea, He is God that cannot lie; it is ever impossible that He should (Num. xxiii. 19; 1 Sam. xv. 29; Titus i. 2; Heb. vi. 18). This frees Him from all deception; He can neither deceive nor be deceived. Jeremiah, indeed, says, "O Lord, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived" (Jer. xx. 7). But this must be understood either as a misapprehension and mistake of the prophet; or the sense is, if I am deceived, God has deceived me; but as that cannot be, therefore I am not deceived: though rather the words may be rendered, Thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded, to enter upon his prophetic office, and to proceed on in the execution of it. Moreover, this attribute clears God of the charge of insincerity, hypocrisy, and dissimulation, which, if in Him, He could not be true.—*Rev. John Gill, M.A.*

II. THE TRUTH OF GOD CONSIDERED AS EMBRACING THREE THINGS.

1 Veracity in all statements and representations.

[11083] Whenever the Bible has been satisfactorily ascertained to be the Word of God, the self-evident dictate of sound reason is, implicit faith in what it testifies. The sole question, as it has been well expressed by Dr. Chalmers, is not, "What thinkest thou?" but "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" It is true that, among the proofs by which the divinity of the Book is ascertained, the contents themselves, the internal evidence, become, under certain views and bearings, no inconsiderable or uninteresting part. But we are now presuming all the various branches of evidence to have been examined, and the result to have been legitimately brought out. And on such a subject as that of which the Bible specially and exclusively treats, a subject in which are wrapped up the interests of the eternity of our being, and on which we look in vain for information from any other quarter; it is truly delightful to have the mind brought to this one simple query, and to a state of immediate and unhesitating assent to the lessons of the God of truth; to the assurance that God says it, and to the consequent assurance that it must be true; to the state of mind expressed in the words dictated by Eli to the young Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth" (1 Sam. iii. 9); or in those of Cornelius to the inspired messenger of heaven, commissioned by a divine oracle to instruct him: "Now, therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God" (Acts x. 33). It is thus that, when we are "weary of conjectures," we "end them," even by a simple and direct reference to the one test of truth, the word of the God of truth; "receiving with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls" (James i. 21). God has said it, and God is true, is an anchor for the soul, when tossed from wave to wave on a sea of perplexity and doubt, with heart-sickening unsettledness, and with the hazard of universal scepticism on the one hand, or of fixed despair on the other.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

[11084] The Divine veracity in statements has more especial reference to the testimonies contained in His word. It does not belong to this particular, that I should prove the Scriptures to be His word. But rather, supposing that to be proved, the particular involves the affirmation that we may, with implicit confidence, rely upon its statements and representations. It were comparatively of but little moment to show the conformity to truth of statements contained in the Bible, in cases where we have other sources of information; as in matters of history and nature, respecting

which we have opportunity of observing and judging for ourselves. Neither is it my present purpose to explain the principles on which certain representations of some of the phenomena of nature, contained in the Bible, are to be reconciled with the realities of the case as ascertained by the investigations of philosophy and science, to which they at first seem opposed; inconsistencies on which infidel objections have occasionally been founded. It is enough to say in regard to these: 1. That it is not for the purpose of teaching us philosophy and science the Bible has been given us. And if any shall say: Granted, yet still in a book professedly "given by inspiration of God," we might reasonably expect to find nothing at least contradictory to what philosophy and science have clearly ascertained to be fact. 2. If, on some of the topics adverted to, the language of the Bible had been adjusted, not, as it actually is, to the appearances presented to the senses of ordinary observers, but to the real philosophy and science of the case, it would have been utterly unintelligible to the vast majority of mankind. Let the philosophers themselves, by whom such objections are made, try to express, in terms of strict scientific truth, the everyday fact of the sun's rising and setting, or going down; by how many, think you, would they be understood? Would not the effect be only to make themselves laughed at as pedantic triflers? —*Ibid.*

2 Faithfulness in all promises and threatenings.

[11085] The great leading promises of God to our race after sin had entered, I need hardly say, related to one theme. This was to be expected. If there was to be a plan of mercy and salvation, to what but to that plan, in its prospective development and execution, could we imagine the Divine promises, if promises were made at all, to relate? Such were those to Adam, to Abraham, to David, and all others to whom Jehovah, in any special way, confirmed His covenant. They all centred in the promise of the Saviour in "the fulness of the time." And that great promise, the sum of all the ancient promises, as including the ground on which they all rested, and the pledge of their universal verification (for from the beginning it was "in Him" that they were all "Yea and Amen") found its fulfilment "in due time." It was like a promissory-note from the bank of Heaven; and it was duly discharged at its given date. Divine promises were not unfrequently fulfilled in the face of seeming difficulties and impossibilities. This was a trial of faith at the time. And thus when, in spite of all that had been fitted to engender doubt, the accomplishment was faithfully effected, it became a powerful encouragement to faith and confidence for the future. God's veracity was thus the more signally established. By exhibiting the union between His veracity and His power, it inspired the assurance that, as God could not deceive, so neither would His revealed purposes ever be baffled for want of ability to execute them, there being nothing too hard for the Lord. We have a fine Bible exemplification, at once of the faithfulness and power of God, and of the vigour of the principle of faith in man, in the case of Abraham.—*Ibid.*

[11086] Of threatenings fulfilled we have many exemplifications in the inspired records. I might instance the Deluge, which overflowed and destroyed "the world of the ungodly," after unceasing premonitions during the intimated term of one hundred and twenty years. The Apostle Peter makes use of this as among the proofs that the threatened destruction of the earth by fire at the end of time shall as surely take effect. There is no more difficulty to Omnipotence in the one case than there was in the other: Omnipotence having all the elements and resources of nature at His command, and being infinitely more than competent to wield them. And as to distance of time, it is here that the very principle already adverted to is introduced and applied by Him. To Him who "knoweth the end from the beginning," and in the arrangement of His plans takes in all time, a millennium and a day are the same thing, as to certainty of foresight and execution.

Threatenings of fearful import were denounced conditionally by Moses, in Jehovah's name, against the people of Israel; or rather both the sins which were to cause the sufferings, and the sufferings themselves, were foretold: the latter of course under the form of judicial denunciations. And in all their past history, and in their still present condition, we have before us the recorded and the visible manifestation of God's truth. That people whom Moses taught to praise Jehovah, and who did praise Him in these terms, "A God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He," have stood out in successive ages, and now stand out, a marvellous and affecting evidence of the truth of what they thus uttered. —*Ibid.*

[11087] The sentence, as far as temporal death is concerned, has, from the beginning, with two exceptions only (which are only exemplifications of the maxim, *Exceptio firmat regulam*), been faithfully and punctually executed. Every successive instance of mortality is a fresh manifestation of God's truth. For towards six thousand years, one generation has been going and another coming. So continual and unvarying has been the succession of generation to generation, that death has come to be regarded and spoken of as the course of nature; and we are in danger of forgetting that it is the execution of a sentence, that it is a penal infliction.

And this punctual faithfulness in the execution of a part of God's sentence against sin, is used, and rightly used, for impressing the conviction that the execution of the whole is as sure as that of the part. God, be it remembered, could threaten, and has threatened, no more than sin

really deserved: no more, therefore, than what it will be right, and (because right) imperative on His moral nature to execute. Whatever it was right to threaten, it must be right to fulfil. In the very idea of God's threatening aught that, in any respect whatsoever, it would not be right in him to execute, there is obviously the most flagrant impiety.—*Ibid.*

3 Sincerity in all assurances, offers, and invitations.

[11088] By assurances, I mean here such as are held out as inducements to compliance with invitations, and acceptance of offers. Surely, if this book be God's word, and if it contained invitations and offers, it might well be assumed that the God who holds out both is sincere in inviting and offering. Surely when He represents Himself as lifting His hand to heaven, and taking His oath to confirm His word—"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn away from his evil way and live;" and then, having given this solemn assurance, adds, on the ground of it, His earnest invitation and entreaty—"Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?" He has a right to expect that we should believe Him in earnest. In like manner, when He says, "Seek ye the Lord, while He may be found," &c. and in numberless other forms expostulates and beseeches, He ought to be held, and that gratefully and gladly, to be divinely sincere. This, I presume, ought to be taken for granted, as a settled principle, a truth above all question, all doubt: "Let God be true, and every man a liar." Make the supposition of there being some doctrines which it is difficult for us to reconcile with this great first truth of the Divine sincerity, whilst yet we find these doctrines explicitly revealed in His word; would it not be most becoming in such creatures to resolve the difficulty into our own ignorance and short-sightedness?

I am not aware of there being any who question the Divine sincerity. It is hardly conceivable that any should who believe in a God at all. It is rather the doctrines to which I have alluded that they question, on the very ground of their not being reconcilable with this great truth, the sincerity of God. The opposite or converse of this has never taken place. It is unimaginable that it should; I mean the questioning of God's sincerity, because of its real or apparent inconsistency with these doctrines. The doctrines to which I allude are those of predestination, and others connected with it.—*Ibid.*

III. THE PRACTICAL USES OF THIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTE.

[11089] We might insist on the fearful guilt of unbelief, as consisting in the rejection of the Divine testimony. The belief of that testimony is described as the "setting to of our seal that God is true" (John iii. 33). While he who does "not receive His testimony" is represented as "making Him a liar" (1 John v. 10). I need not say that in this latter representation, and all of a similar description, it is assumed that there is a sufficiency of evidence, a sufficiency of means of knowing both the testimony and its evidence, and a sufficiency of natural ability to apprehend and appreciate it.

We might find in this attribute a ground of confidence and mental composure, amidst all the variations of God's providential procedure. In those variations there may to us be not a little of mystery; but it is only to us. They may at times be difficult of reconciliation with His promises; but the difficulty is only to us. "We walk by faith" (2 Cor. v. 7). To every one of those promises God is still true. And when "clouds and darkness are thus round about Him," what is His language to His people? "Who is among you that feareth the Lord" (Isa. l. 10), &c.

We might sound an alarm in the ears of sinners, on the ground of the certain truth as well as dreadful nature of Divine threatenings; warning them against all the plausibilities by which they are in danger of flattering themselves, and putting off from time to time the serious consideration of the things that belong unto their peace; plausibilities drawn from the general mercy of God, from the delay of His vengeance, from His providential goodness, and from various other sources. It is true of threatenings as well as of promises, that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." If it is said, "God is not slack concerning His promise," it is also said, "whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (2 Pet. ii. 3).

This attribute of the Divine character ought to be imitated by us. There is not an evil more frequently or more severely reprobated in the sacred volume than lying, departure from truth under every form and modification of the evil. Let us bear this in mind, both personally and officially. I need not urge upon you the paramount duty of incorruptible adherence to truth in all your personal words and actions, in the whole course of the daily intercommunion of social life. And let me specially press the sentiment on your convictions, as I desire to have it deeply settled in my own, graven on my conscience and my heart, that of all lying, incomparably the worst species is lying in the name of the God of truth, attaching or attempting to attach the sanction of that Name to aught that has not a place in His word; what Paul designates as "handling the word of God deceitfully" (2 Cor. iv. 2). This is the most flagrant in the whole catalogue of human crimes. —*Ibid.*

IV. THE DENIALS OF PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY WITH REGARD TO THIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTE MET AND REFUTED.

[11090] The philosophical theologians virtu-

ally deny that there is any such attribute in God as truth. They say that what is intended by that term is only the uniformity of law. The efficiency of God is always exercised in such a way that we may confide in the regular sequence of events. In this respect it may be said that God is true. Bruch admits "That this idea arises necessarily out of our religious consciousness, inasmuch as we embrace with full confidence what we regard as a Divine revelation, and are persuaded that God in due time will fulfil whatsoever he has purposed, promised, or threatened. This confidence is in the strongest terms often expressed in the sacred writings, and is the source of the firm faith by which the Christian receives the revelation made in Christ; and of the unshaken confidence with which he anticipates the fulfilment of the Divine promises." Nevertheless, although this idea of the truth of God has its foundation in our own nature, and is so clearly recognized in Scripture, and although it enters so deeply into the religious experience and hopes of the believer, it is a delusion. There is no such attribute in God. It is unphilosophical, and therefore impossible that there should be the distinction, which must then be assumed, between purpose and act in the Divine mind. The ascription of truth or veracity to God rests, says Bruch, "on the assumption of a distinction in Him between thought and its manifestation, between His promises and threatenings, and their accomplishment, which not only destroys the unity of the Divine essence, but reduces Him to the limitations and changes of time."—*Dr. C. Hodge.*

[11091] As the ascription of veracity to God arises out of what we observe in ourselves, it bears the impress of anthropomorphism, and has no claim to scientific recognition. He further objects to the ascription of truth to God, in the ordinary sense of that term, because God works uniformly according to law, and therefore, "properly speaking, there can be no such thing as promises or threatenings with Him." The idea is, that as God has established certain physical laws, and if men comply with them they are well, if they violate them they suffer for it; so there are laws which determine the well-being of rational creatures: if we observe those laws we are happy; if we disregard them we are miserable. God has nothing to do with it, except as He established those laws and carries them out. The philosophical idea, therefore, of the truth of God, is the immutability of law, physical and moral. This view is still more definitely presented by Schweizer. God from the beginning to the end of the world is one and the same causality; this, in reference to the moral world, is His truth, *veracitas, fidelitas*, in so far as the later revelations, or manifestations of this causality, correspond to what the earlier manifestations would lead us to expect. God, according to this view, is not so much a person, as a name for the moral order of the universe. There is, of course, some truth in this mode of representation. The laws of God, by which He governs His creatures, rational and irrational, are uniform. It is true that a man reaps what he sows; that he receives here and hereafter the natural consequences of his conduct. If he sows to the flesh, he reaps corruption; if he sows to the spirit, he reaps life everlasting. But these laws are administered by a personal God, who, as He controls physical laws so as to produce plenty or famine, health or pestilence, as to Him seems fit, so also He controls all the laws which determine the well-being of the souls of men, so as to accomplish His designs and to secure the fulfilment of His promises and threatenings. The laws of a well-ordered human government are uniform and impartial, but that is not inconsistent with their human administration.

It is a great mercy that, at least in some cases, those whose philosophy forbids their believing in the personality of God, believe in the personality of Christ, whom they regard as a man invested with all the attributes of the Godhead, and whom they love and worship accordingly.—*Ibid.*

20

LOVE.

I. The Peculiar Divinity of this Attribute.

[11092] Love is God's nature. Not that no other feeling exists in Him; not that justice and abhorrence of evil are not co-ordinated with it; not that these do not take part in the Divine administration among men; but that the central and peculiarly Divine element is love, in which all other feelings live, within whose bounds they all act, to which they are servants, and for which they are messengers and helpers.—*Beecher.*

[11093] It is not said of Him that He loves merely, but that He is love. All love, whatever may be the human form of its manifestation—whether paternal, filial, or fraternal—comes from Him. As all the sap in the tree comes from the roots, all the blood in the body comes from the heart, all the water in the clouds comes from the seas, and all the light of the stars comes from the sun; so all the love in heaven and earth has its origin in God. His love is unfathomable and all-comprehensive. It blooms in all beauty, pulsates in all true life, and vibrates in all melody. But, as all the varied hues of light, as reflected in the rainbow, are blended into one white ray in the sun; so likewise all the numerous manifestations of love, as witnessed in the universe, centralize in Christ, "who is the image of the invisible God" and "the brightness of His glory."—*P. L. Davies, M.A.*

II. The Terrible Intensity of Divine Love.

[11094] "God is love;" and therefore God is terrible. From whence arises His marvellous love to man? Of man He has no need; the Divine happiness is complete; in man He sees no merit: He knows we are worthless, as well as we ourselves: but then, far better than we, He knows that we are "immortal;" that therefore we must "suffer" or "enjoy" for ever. Hence His regard for man. Hence, for a worm, to-day crawling out of the earth, to-morrow, more despicably still, crawling into corruption; His compassion, His solicitude, His councils held on high; and all the wonders of his love. . . . But why sayest thou that this love is "terrible"? Is not that love most terrible which tells us we are in danger of being eternally undone? And this love tells us so. How deep, then, and deplorable is their mistake, who presume to sin, because God is so good—who presume on impunity for sin, because God is so good, when God is so good purely because He knows that sin and impunity are incompatible! God, indeed, forbids our despair, but not because His love will save us; but because despair stops all effort at amendment, and without it His love desires our welfare in vain. His love is such as to give us encouragement and support in everything but sin; such as to support our spirits amid the ruins of a fallen world; but not under the darkening cloud of one unrepented guilt.—*E. Young.*

III. Its Display.

1 In changeless and unceasing tenderness.

[11095] Man loves, and he loves but for a time; the same man that loved upon a small occasion, comes to hate as extremely as he loved tenderly; the reason is, because man is mutable. But God loves more earnestly than man can do; for it is His essence, and He never changes.—*R. Stock*, 1641.

[11096] The activity of Divine love is ceaseless; it knows no rest, no Sabbath. Hence its right to intervene at all times for the good and salvation of men.—*E. De Pressensé.*

2 In severity of discipline.

[11097] This love in its purity, in its absolute unselfishness, in its generosity, in its entireness of dominion over all relations with each other, is the type, the preparation, the beginning of that highest love with which God embraces us all. And this highest love is marked, I say, by its severity; for the absolute condition of it is that it will never rest contented till it has lifted up the man whom it reaches to a level with itself. The lower love will often shrink from giving pain; nay, will rightly do so, unless it knows that the pain will purify; but not so the love of God. No suffering that we can suffer, no severity of punishment, no bitterness of remorse, no accumulation of miserable consequences, shall that love spare us in the pursuit of its purpose to lift us up to itself.—*Frederick Temple, D.D.*

[11098] Because I believe in a God of absolute and unbounded love, therefore I believe in a loving anger of His which will and must devour and destroy all which is decayed, monstrous, abortive in His universe, till all enemies shall be put under His feet, and God shall be all in all.—*Charles Kingsley.*

[11099] We have come to see the beauty of law, and to know that the broken heart, the dying babe, the crucified Christ — all these things come as much out of the Divine love as the flowering spring, the yellow harvest, the marriage-day, and the birth of the firstborn. We believe that God is the merciful Giver to man of bitterness, as well as of what men call bliss; we believe that when we are sad He is as near to us as when we are glad; we believe that He is equally the Author of what men call evil as He is of happiness: that all is of God, all in God; and that we, as motes in the summer sunbeams, float in God. And we rise at last, not in pride, but in humility, to say: Where each man is at this moment is best for his eternal gain, the world's eternal good, and the unbroken purposes of the Almighty. Does it require little faith and courage to hold this creed? It requires more humility, more faith, more courage.—*Rev. George Dawson, M.A.*

3 In universal benevolence.

[11100] In every part of the New Testament the distinction is noted between disinterested love, springing from the goodness of the Divine nature, and a love which is excited and developed by moral quality in the object of it. It is taught abundantly that God's nature is such that He overflows with love from a Divine fulness and richness of heart, and that out of this fulness and richness, without regard to the quality of a man's being, there is a form of love developed from God toward him. "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." It is not meant that there is no difference before God between men whose characters are altogether evil, and those whose characters are beginning to be good: but only this, that God does not love, as it were, upon an agreement—He does not love simply upon the preception of a cause or of an occasion. There is a fulness of His love which is spontaneous. There is such richness, and depth, and treasure, and abundance of Divine feeling, that it tends to flow over immeasurably, unless there is something which absolutely stops it. This is the pulse that beats out from the heart of God through creation. This is the nature and first tendency of the Divine disposition.—*Beecher.*

IV. Characteristics of God's Love as manifested in Christ.

1 Absolute naturalness.

[11101] The highest angel, the most glowing seraph, has no property in himself. He is made for a peculiar sphere, he is amenable to a peculiar law, he is dependent on a peculiar arrangement of things. He can do nothing that is peremptory and self-devoting: he cannot at pleasure select his own station, and assign his own province. However exalted, he leans but the more on infinite power, and is bound but the more to infinite authority. According to his elevation in the scale, his reliance is full, and his obedience sensitive. But "the love of Christ" soars above these conditions. Sometimes, it is true, He is called the gift of God, even the Father. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." But where is the emphasis of the contrast, where is the munificence of the boon, if that Son was a created being? The Divine Will could have peopled worlds with beings as fair, as pure, as benevolent. A moment, a mandate, would have sufficed; and the counterpart to the most pre-eminent creature might have stood up in the beauty and splendour of his existence. How is that gift so vast which bestows nothing but what the Supreme Volition, at every moment, might have matched and exceeded? But the economy of redemption, with the respective offices borne in it by the persons of the Godhead, may satisfy us of the true solution. In one sense, He was the gift of God by voluntary condescension and official subordination. But was He not His own? Of irresponsible authority? Of self-determining action? Nothing is more frequently and distinctly indicated:—"Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world." "Christ also hath loved us, and given Himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God." "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it." "Who gave Himself a ransom for all." "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity."—*Richard Winter Hamilton, D.D., LL.D.*

2 Transcendent purity.

[11102] "He loveth righteousness, and hateth wickedness." Him the seraphim with the six wings, of old adored as the "thrice holy Jehovah," in "their trinal triplicities on high." Not one yearning of His pity impaired His complacency in infinite excellence, or His detestation of whatever opposed it. When His commiseration was most exquisite, finding its relief in sighs and tears, it was chastened with all the sentiments and emotions which fill angels with awe and fiends with despair. The law was within His heart at the moment of its most melting kindness, and expanded to its enlargement, and warmed with its glow. Rectitude and justice there dwelt in the embrace of love and mercy. Holiness was the standard of His grace—grace was the expression of His holiness. He hated not sin the less when He wept over Jerusalem, than when He sent forth His armies to destroy it: He did not compassionate sinners more at the Crucifixion than He will at the Judgment. And, therefore, is a character of reverence to be remarked in all the displays of His love. He is "separate from sinners." His ineffable purity is cherished with the infinite endearment He knew when in the bosom of the Father; it enshrines His incarnate person; and all His benevolence smiles through its features, speaks with its lips, and distributes by its hands!—*Ibid.*

V. Divine Love reflected in Man.

[11103] Love is a meek and blessed influence, stealing in, as it were, unawares upon the heart; it comes quietly and without excitement, it has no terror, no gloom in its approaches; it does not rouse up the passions; . . . it is fresh from the hands of its Author, glowing from the immediate presence of the great Spirit which pervades and quickens it; it is written on the arched sky; it looks out from every star; it is on the sailing cloud, and in the invisible wind; it is among the hills and valleys of the earth, where the shrubless mountain-top pierces the thin atmosphere of eternal winter, or where the mighty forest fluctuates before the strong wind, with its dark waves of green foliage; it is spread out, like a legible language, upon the broad face of the unsleeping ocean; it is the poetry of nature; it is this which uplifts the spirit within us, until it is strong enough to overlook the shadows of our place of probation; which breaks, link after link, the chain that binds us to materiality, and which opens to our imagination a world of spiritual beauty and holiness.—*John Ruskin.*

[11104] The fatherly love of God is a love which can alone be satisfied by the awakening in its object of that which is correspondent to itself.—*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*

VI. Answer to Philosophical Objections concerning the Divine Susceptibility to Emotion.

[11105] Love in us includes complacency and delight in its object, with the desire of possession and communion. The schoolmen, and often the philosophical theologians, tell us that there is no feeling in God. This, they say, would imply passivity, or susceptibility of impression from without, which it is assumed is incompatible with the nature of God. "We must exclude," says Bruch, passivity from the idea of love, as it exists in God. For God cannot be the subject of passivity in any form. Besides, if God experienced complacency in intelligent beings, He would be dependent on them; which is inconsistent with His nature as an Absolute Being." Love, therefore, he defines as that attribute of God which secures the development of the rational universe; or, as Schleier-

nacher expresses it, "It is that attribute in virtue of which God communicates Himself." According to the philosophers, the Infinite develops itself in the finite; this fact, in theological language, is due to love. The only point of analogy between love in us and love in the Absolute and Infinite is self-communication. Love in us leads to self-revelation and communion; in point of fact the Infinite is revealed and developed in the universe, and specially in humanity. Bruch admits that this doctrine is in real contradiction to the representations of God in the Old Testament, and in apparent contradiction to those of the New Testament. If love in God is only a name for that which accounts for the rational universe; if God is love, simply because He develops Himself in thinking and conscious being, then the word has for us no definite meaning; it reveals to us nothing concerning the real nature of God. Here again we have to choose between a mere philosophical speculation and the clear testimony of the Bible, and of our own moral and religious nature. Love of necessity involves feeling, and if there be no feeling in God, there can be no love. That He produces happiness is no proof of love. The earth does that unconsciously and without design. Men often render others happy from vanity, from fear, or from caprice. Unless the production of happiness can be referred not only to a conscious intention, but to a purpose dictated by kind feeling, it is no proof of benevolence. And unless the children of God are the objects of His complacency and delight, they are not the objects of His love. He may be cold, insensible, indifferent, or even unconscious; He ceases to be God in the sense of the Bible, and in the sense in which we need a God, unless He can love as well as know and act. The philosophical objection against ascribing feeling to God, bears, as we have seen, with equal force against the ascription to Him of knowledge or will. If that objection be valid, He becomes to us simply an unknown cause, what men of science call force; that to which all phenomena are to be referred, but of which we know nothing. We must adhere to the truth in its Scriptural form, or we lose it altogether. We must believe that God is love in the sense in which that word comes home to the human heart. The Scriptures do not mock us when they say, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him" (Psa. ciii. 13). He meant what He said when He proclaimed Himself as "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth" (Exod. xxxiv. 6). "Beloved," says the apostle, "let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God loved us, we ought also to love one another" (1 John iv. 7–11). The word love has the same sense throughout this passage. God is love; and love in Him is, in all that is essential to its nature, what love is in us. Herein we do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.—*Dr. C. Hodge.*

21

COMPASSION.

I. Its Nature and Characteristics.

1 Incomparable and infinite.

[11106] His pity is infinite, moving with equal step to all the other attributes of God, and holding its course and path as far forth as omniscience doth; it paces with omnipresence along the circuits of infinity! The noblest heart on earth is but a trickling stream from a a faint and wasting fountain compared with the ineffable soul and heart of God, the everlasting Father! The compassion of God is like a father's in all that is tender, strong, and full, but not in scope and power. For every one of God's feelings moves in the sphere of the infinite. His pity has all the scope and divinity which belong to power, wisdom, justice! Power, wisdom, and justice are God's lesser ways, and comes towards that side of His Being where there would be restriction if anywhere; while love and mercy are God's peculiar glory. In these He finds the most glorious liberty of the Divine Nature.—*Beecher.*

2 Changeless, abiding, and boundless.

[11107] God's pity abides, even as He abides, and partakes of the Divine grandeur and omnipotence. There is a whole eternity in it for substance and duration. As God Himself cannot be measured with lines of latitude and longitude, but is boundless, so is His every attribute. God, in His almightiness, asks no rest and requires no slumber, but holds straight on without weariness, wearing out the ages, Himself unworn; changing all things, Himself without variableness or shadow of turning! God is like the sun at noon, that casts down straight rays, and so throws down the shadows upon the ground underneath each tree; but He never, like the sun, goes westward towards his setting, turning all shadows from under the trees, and slanting them upon the ground. God stands in eternal fulness, like a sun that knows neither morning, nor evening nor night, but only noon, and noon always!—*Ibid.*

II. Human Need of Divine Compassion.

[11108] The pity of God is the working out of the whole Divine nature of goodness toward the human family, in their unformed, immature, sinful, struggling existence. The race was not

born perfect—men were sown as seeds are. They come of germs, turn to leaves, shoot forth a slender stem, grow little by little to branches, and find firmness and solidity only after a long probation of weakness, temptation, sin, and all its sorrows. This is true of individual men. It is true historically of mankind. The need of compassion for the race has been just as great as is the need in every household of compassion towards babes and young children. It is still the need of each man and of the whole world. As much crime as there is, calling for punishment—as much deliberate wrong, to be met by deliberate justice—as much licence as there is, and overflowing passion and desolating lust—there is even more ignorance, mistake, sorrowful weakness, and unwitting evil. The world wanders like a half-grown orphan, calling for aid without answer, and weeps for trouble, and wanders still, stumbling through ages. And though it needs reproof and correction, it needs kindness more. Though it needs the grasp of the strong hand, it needs, too, the open palm of love and tenderness. It requires punishment; but it needs pity even more than avenging justice.—*Ibid.*

III. Divine Compassion applied to Human Need.

1 On account of our weakness.

[11109] God looks upon our littleness, as compared with His angels that excel in strength, much, it may be supposed, as we look upon little children as compared with grown-up men. —*Ibid.*

2 In view of our sufferings.

[11110] We sometimes fear to bring our troubles to God, because they must seem so small to Him who sitteth on the circle of the earth. But if they are large enough to vex and endanger our welfare, they are large enough to touch His heart of love. For love does not measure by a merchant's scales, nor with a surveyor's chain. It hath a delicacy which is unknown in any handling of material substances. —*Ibid.*

22

GOODNESS.

I. Its Nature.

1 It is independent, infinite, perfect, and unchanging.

[11111] God only is originally good, good of Himself. All created goodness is a rivulet from this Fountain, but Divine goodness hath no spring; God depends upon no other for His goodness, He hath it in and of Himself; man hath no goodness from himself, God hath no goodness from without Himself; His goodness is no more derived from another than His being. If He were good by any external thing, that thing must be in being before Him, or after Him; if before Him, He was not then Himself from eternity; if after Him, He was not good in Himself from eternity. The end of His creating things, then, was not to confer a goodness upon His creatures, but to partake of a goodness from His creatures. God is good by and in Himself, since all things are only good by Him; and all that goodness which is in creatures is but the breathing of His own goodness upon them. They have all their loveliness from the same hand they have their being from. Though by creation God was declared good, yet He was not made good by any, or by all the creatures. He partakes of none, but all things partake of Him. He is so good that He gives all, and receives nothing: "Only good," because nothing is good but by Him, nothing hath a goodness but from Him. And God only is infinitely good. A boundless goodness that knows no limits, a goodness as infinite as His essence; not only good, but best; not only good, but goodness itself, the supreme, inconceivable goodness. All things else are but little particles of God, small sparks from this immense flame, sips of goodness from this Fountain. Nothing that is good by His influence can equal Him, who is good by Himself; derived goodness can never equal primitive goodness. Divine goodness communicates itself to a vast number of creatures in various degrees—to angels, glorified spirits, men on earth, to every creature; and when it hath communicated all that the present world is capable of, there is still less displayed than left to enrich another world. All possible creatures are not capable of exhausting the wealth, the treasures, that Divine bounty is filled with. And God only is perfectly good, because only infinitely good. He is good without indigence, because He hath the whole nature of goodness, not only some beams that may admit of increase of degree. As in Him is the whole nature of entity, so in Him is the whole nature of excellency. As nothing hath an absolute perfect being but God, so nothing hath an absolutely perfect goodness but God; as the sun hath a perfection of heat in it, but what is warmed by the sun is but imperfectly hot, and equals not the sun in that perfection of heat wherewith it is naturally endued. The goodness of God is the measure and rule of goodness in every thing else. Lastly, God only is immutably good. Other things may be perpetually good by supernatural power, but not immutably good in their own nature. Other things are not so good but they may be bad; God is so good that He cannot be bad. It was the speech of a philosopher, that it was a hard thing to find a good man, yea, impossible; but though it were possible to find a good man, he would be good but for some moment, or a short time; for though he should be good at this instant, it was above the nature of man to continue in a habit of goodness without going awry and warping.—*Charnock.*

II. Its Revelation through the Spirit.

[11112] Whether men could have discovered the goodness of God without a revelation is a question which has been considerably agitated for the last century, having been called up by the onset made upon religion by modern infidelity. It may probably be admitted that had men continued in a state of innocence, with minds unclouded by sin and prejudice, and living in a world unaffected with evil, they would have been fully persuaded of the goodness of God without a revelation, provided that without a revelation they could have discovered His existence and universal agency. But blinded as they are by the fall, and having daily proofs before them of the existence of sin and misery, there is reason to believe either that they could not, or that they would not, have learned the unmixed goodness of God without instructions from heaven. This opinion is confirmed by experience. No portion of the heathen world, with all the glimmerings of lights reflected from the Church, have, in any age or country, formed correct ideas of the moral character of God. The character which even the polished Greeks and Romans ascribed to their Jupiter was such as no decent man in the present age would be willing to sustain. It was reserved for the Holy Spirit, which knoweth the things of God as the spirit of a man the things of a man, to disclose the disposition of the Eternal Mind, to show us a Being who is love itself, whose happiness consists in doing good, whose chief end is to form a holy, happy kingdom, full of the knowledge of His glory. It was reserved for the Holy Spirit to explain the tendency of those measures which God has adopted for this end. Enlightened by the truths which the Spirit of God reveals, we may look with clearer vision upon the heavens and the earth, upon the dispensations of God, upon His minutest works, and see in them all proof, before unknown, of His amazing goodness.—*E. Darr Griffin, D.D.*

III. Its Manifestations.

1 In the structure of the world.

[11113] The more the religious mind is enlightened by philosophy, the more it is lost in the admiration of the wisdom and goodness which appear in every part of creation. The whole is one vast museum of curiosities, strongly evincive of wise and benevolent design. Everything (except sin and its immediate effects) is admirably calculated to subserve the happiness of creatures. A Christian cannot view the sun, placed in the heavens to enlighten, warm, and influence the dependent planets, without seeing a constant monument of the goodness of the Creator. Nor without strong impressions of the same sort can philosophy, baptized, contemplate the laws which regulate the heavenly bodies, their structure, motions, regularity, and various influence upon the happiness of the creation. The air in which we breathe is charged by the Creator to perform various necessary and important offices for man. The ocean has its numerous uses. The laws of vegetation, which have so much influence on the beauty of the world and the support of animal life; every organ of the human body; every social affection and relation; the numerous instincts and faculties of beast, bird, fish, and worm, so admirably fitted for their preservation and defence; the organization of every plant and spire of grass—all conspire to proclaim the matchless goodness of their Author. There is more benevolent design in a single field of wheat—I might have said, in a single blade—than all the philosophers of the world can comprehend. There is more benevolent design in the faculties of yonder bird that hangs under the arch of heaven, or in the minutest limb of the insect which hums in the evening air, than human reason can ever fathom. On no point of nature's works can we fix our eye without seeing marks of amazing goodness.—*Ibid.*

2 In the exquisite organism of the human frame.

[11114] The phenomena which prove the existence of God also demonstrate that He delights in the happiness of His creatures. For it is conceivable that the world might have been filled with adaptations as wonderful as any of the existing ones, but all of them of a diametrically opposite character. The exquisitely formed joints of the animal frame might, in the very delicacy of their organism, have communicated the more exquisite pain. The plants of the earth might have grown to nourish the bodies of animals only as the food spread through the organs to torture every member. The sunbeams, instead of gladdening all nature, might have struck every living being as with a succession of spear-points to harass and annoy. How delightful to find that every adaptation indicating design also indicates benevolence, and that we have as clear evidence of the goodness as of the very existence of God!—*McCosh, D.D.*

[11115] On this theme more books might be composed than the world now contains without exhausting the subject. A whole library might be written on the goodness apparent in the structure of the human body.—*E. Darr Griffin, D.D.*

3 In God's preservation and care of His works.

[11116] The same power that constructed the universe is necessary every moment to its continuance and order. When with the eye of philosophy we examine the mechanism of nature, we see that goodness not only created the countless wheels of this vast machine, but exerts equal energy and care every moment to preserve their being, properties, and motions. The goodness of God sustains the sun in his place, and sends out every ray that enlightens and warms the earth. The action of the atmosphere in supporting animal life and vegetation

shows the constant agency of Divine goodness. All the countless varieties of nature's operations are but the effects of the infinitely diversified and constantly repeated efforts of Divine goodness. We are lost in the boundless contemplation, and can only say, "This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excelleth in working."—*Ibid.*

4 **In the interpositions of His providence.**

[11117] Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without Him, and the hairs of our head are all numbered. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." His throne, as represented in Ezekiel's vision, is erected over the wheels of providence, which, though in the highest degree complicated, like wheels within wheels, do, to those who attentively and filially observe them, furnish abundant evidence of Divine goodness. The sacred history throws great light on this department of God's government. There we trace His dealings with nations and with individuals for several hundred years, and view His providence irradiated by a column of light from heaven. There we see the benevolent designs of His judgments upon wicked nations and individuals, and His agency in all the comforts bestowed on His people. There we trace His faithfulness to His saints, His sudden interpositions to supply their wants, to deliver them from their enemies, to arrest evils on their way to assail them, and to turn all their afflictions to a good account. There the most mysterious and complex dispensations are analyzed, and the use of every part explained before our eyes. These are exhibited as specimens, to enable us to understand the designs of Providence in every age. Instructed by these disclosures, we may daily read the goodness of God, not only in those great events which concern nations, but in those which relate to families and individuals. The whole skein of providence, from the falling of a sparrow to the revolutions of empire, the whole skein of providence in all worlds, is nothing but the constantly repeated action of Divine goodness and the universal extension of Divine care. —*Ibid.*

5 **In the scheme of His government.**

[11118] Men deeply engaged in a great design are unmindful of smaller things. They have not capacity to take up and arrange various matters at once. Their main purpose often miscarries by a neglect of certain circumstances which, though apparently inconsiderable, are still essential to the object principally in view. But God's providence regards all creatures, superintends all events, and directs all the circumstances attending them. To Him there is no high or low, great or small. The things which we esteem trifling may be great in their connexions and interesting in their consequences. The perfection and rectitude of His government depend on His constant care of every creature among His numerous subjects, and on His exact inspection of every occurrence throughout His wide dominions.—*J. Lathrop, D.D.*

6 **In the administration of His grace.**

[11119] What goodness is that which daily looks after a revolted world, which calls and entreats them to return, which sends the Holy Spirit to overcome their obstinacy and to bring them back to God and to happiness! What amazing goodness is that which pardons all their sins, which admits them to the privileges of children, and treats them with such ineffable tenderness and care! That the eternal God should condescend to hold communion with unworthy worms, that He should hear their prayers and supply all their wants and defend them with a Father's care, and not only pardon their daily sins, but take upon Himself the charge of subduing their remaining corruptions; that He should throw Himself between them and their enemies and dangers, resolving never to forsake them till He has brought them home to His heavenly kingdom—all this is a manifestation of goodness which no finite mind can comprehend. The more we reflect on these several topics with deep and pious scrutiny, the more will our minds be overwhelmed with the unsearchable, the infinite goodness of God. It is the miserable condition of man by nature to be blind to this amazing goodness; and this world, this benighted and guilty world, has but little sense of the glorious Being who reigns above and shines in all His works. But it will not be always thus. These astonishing measures by which God has expressed the benevolence of His nature will yet fill the world with His glory; and men, in every nation and clime under heaven, "shall abundantly utter the memory of" His "great goodness."—*E. Darr Griffin, D.D.*

IV. Its Obligations on Man.

1 **The sense of Divine goodness should endue us with thankfulness and patience in the service of God.**

[11120] The goodness of God obligeth us to serve Him, not to offend Him: the freeness of His goodness should make us more ready to contribute to the advancement of His glory. When we consider the benefits of a friend proceed out of kindness to us, and not out of self-ends and vain applause, it works more upon us, and makes us more careful of the honour of such a person. It is a pure bounty God hath manifested in creation and providence, which could not be for Himself, who being blessed for ever, wanted nothing from us: it was not to draw a profit from us, but to impart an advantage to us; our goodness extends not to Him (Psa. xvi. 2). The service of the Benefactor is but a rational return for benefits; whence Nehemiah aggravates the sins of the Jews, "They have not served Thee . . . in Thy great goodness that Thou gavest them" (Neh. ix. 35); that is, which Thou didst freely bestow upon them. How should

we dare to spend upon our lusts that which we possess, if we considered by whose liberality we came by it? How should we dare to be unfaithful in the goods He hath made us trustees of? A deep sense of Divine goodness will ennoble the creature, and make it act for the most glorious and noble end; it would strike Satan's temptation dead at a blow; it would pull off the false mask and visor from what he present to us to draw us from the service of our Benefactor. We could not with a sense of this think him kinder to us than God hath been and will be, which is the great motive of men, to join hands with him and turn their backs upon God. A sense of the Divine goodness would make us patient under our miseries. A deep sense of this would make us give God the honour of His goodness in whatsoever He doth, though the reason of His actions be not apparent to us, nor the event and issue of His proceedings foreseen by us. It is a stated case that goodness can never intend ill, but designs good in all its acts, to them that love God (Rom. viii. 28). Nay, He always designs the best; when He bestows anything upon His people, He sees it best they should have it; and when He removes anything from them, He sees it best they should lose it. When we have lost a thing we loved, and refuse to be comforted, a sense of this perfection, which acts God in all, would keep us from misjudging our sufferings, and measuring the intention of the hand that sent them, by the sharpness of what we feel.—*Charnock.*

2 **The sense of Divine goodness should dispose us to benevolence and forbearance in our conduct towards others.**

[11121] The best man is more unworthy to receive anything from God than the worst can be to receive from us. How kind is God to those that blaspheme Him, and gives them the same sun and the same showers that He doth to the best men in the world! Is it not more our glory to imitate God, in doing good to those that hate us, than to imitate the men of the world in requiting evil, by a return of a sevenfold mischief? If His goodness hath such an influence upon us as to make us love Him, it will also move us with an ardent zeal to imitate Him in it. Christ makes this use from the doctrine of Divine goodness, "Do good to them that hate you . . . that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good" (Matt. v. 44, 45). As holiness is a resemblance of God's purity, so charity is a resemblance of God's goodness; and this our Saviour calls perfection: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (ver. 48). As God would not be a perfect God without goodness, so neither can any be a perfect Christian without kindness; charity and love being the splendour and loveliness of all Christian graces, as goodness is the splendour and loveliness of all Divine attributes. This and holiness are ordered in the Scripture to be the grand patterns of our imitation.—*Ibid.*

23

GRACIOUSNESS.

I. Definition and Nature of Divine Graciousness.

[11122] It is expedient to define what we mean by Divine goodness or benignity. We do not mean *good-doing*. A being may do many good works, works tending to general happiness, who is himself not good; and, on the other hand, it is possible for a being to do certain works whose tendency is toward suffering, who may nevertheless be of a benevolent disposition. We mean *good-being*—goodness of nature. We mean not merely that he does good things, but that his general purpose, disposition, nature, are to good, and good only; that benevolence is the very spring and stamina of his character. How, then, is this fact of the Divine *nature* to be ascertained? David says, "Thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes," and we believe that he expresses the experience of humanity. —*Homily on the Manifestations of Divine Benignity.*

II. The Human Ascertainment of Divine Graciousness.

1 **God's benignity is a fact ever before the eyes of man's investigating intellect.**

[11123] Man's reasoning upon the general facts of the universe, as they come within his observation, must bring up his intellect face to face with the goodness of God as the ultimate fact—the fontal impulse of all. The general tendency of the universe is to produce happiness. The common heart of humanity echoes this truth. However serious, and even exaggerated, the views of some may be concerning the evils that are in the world, deeply seated, as we shall soon see, in the general mind is the impression that happiness is the law and tenor of all nature. It has no other idea until it begins to speculate. Some biblical critics maintain that the first idea produced by the reading of any portion of Scripture is most probably the correct one. Whether this be true or not, we believe that this first impression that nature makes upon the general mind of humanity is the true one, for this general impression is confirmed by all scientific research. Science demonstrates two things: first, that the organization of every sentient being is contrived for happiness—that every faculty, sense, limb, vessel, and fibre, are so adjusted as to conduce to the well-being of the whole, so that the movement of each yields gratification. Its keen eye has never been yet detected, in the case of any creature, one single constituent of his existence which he could regard as intended to give pain. Not one of the countless myriads of sentient vessels can he find "fitted for destruction." And, secondly, science demonstrates that the external sphere of each sentient being has suitable provisions for its happiness. Through all the realms of animal

nature into which philosophy has gone, from the tiniest insect up to man, there is found in the ordained sphere of each creature a supply for every want, an object for every desire, a pleasure to penetrate every sense.—*Ibid.*

[11124] No anatomist ever observed a system of organization calculated to produce pain and disease ; or, in explaining the parts of the human body, ever said, This is to irritate ; this is to inflame ; this duct is to convey the gravel to the kidneys ; this gland, to secrete the humour which forms the gout.—*Paley.*

[11125] Though we are disposed to believe that the proportion of suffering to happiness, in man's experience is far greater than in the other sentient tenants of our earth, still to him pain is the exception and pleasure is the rule. His memories of pain, it is true, are ever more vivid than those of pleasure, and far more disposed is he to talk of his trials than his blessings ; but is not the very rarity of his sufferings as compared with his enjoyments the cause of this? The man who has returned home from a long voyage on the mighty waters thinks and talks more of the hardships of the tempest that beat fiercely on his bark in one night than of the smiling skies and propitious gales of many months. So it is : the uncommon ever makes a deeper impression than the general — the incidental exception than the general rule. The whole suffering of humanity here is but as one stormy night in the voyage of its earthly history ; it is but a cloudy moment in a bright day of life. Evil is but a passing note or two at most in creation's long and joyous anthem.—*Homily on the Manifestations of Divine Benignity.*

[11126] If the general tendency of the universe is happiness, how comes it to pass that there is so much suffering in the world? We are by no means anxious to underrate the amount of evil; truth never gains either by ignoring or depreciating facts, which seem to tell in another direction. Evil exists, and we admit it, even to the fullest extent in which it is found, and yet maintain, with all the confidence of conviction, the position we have asserted. There is a fact in connexion with suffering which shows that its existence is compatible with the doctrine that the general tendency of the universe is toward happiness : that the sufferings of a creature here are but a very inconsiderable item in its life when compared with its enjoyments. Take the sufferings of the lower creation : cast into one sum all the pains of hunger and cold, the pangs of parturition, and the throes of death—whether occurring by disease, exhaustion, or predatorial destruction—and who will say that it bears any comparison to the aggregate of pleasure? "There is not a moment," says an able philosophic writer, "in which the quantity of agreeable sensations, felt by myriads of creatures, may not be far greater than all the pain which is felt at the same moment.—*Ibid.*

[11127] In the general tendency of things the "lovingkindness" of God stands out before the eye of intellect. Reason meets it everywhere : in the minerals of the mountains, and in the treasures of the deep ; in the springing blade, the blooming flower, and bending tree ; in the internal organism and external provision of all material and mental existences ; in the flowing light and rolling atmosphere ; in the changing temperature and the circling seasons. Goodness is a ubiquitous presence to the open eye—an eternal anthem to the open ear of inquiring reason. It hears "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are therein," proclaim, in ever-varying tones, "God is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works."—*Ibid.*

2 God's benignity is a fact ever before the eye of man's general consciousness.

[11128] Turning away his attention from the immeasurable regions of pleasure that everywhere smile and sing around him, and confining his notice exclusively to scenes gloomy with sorrow and tenanted with the victims of suffering, an opponent may gather up facts from this dark side of things which his logical ingenuity might forge into an argument that would tell upon the unthinking and sceptically inclined of his fellowmen. He may thus cloud Divine goodness from the eye of the mere reasoning faculty of such, by awakening certain speculative doubts suggested by a miserably partial and distorted survey of facts. But we now proceed to a view of this subject which no speculative reasoning can obscure ; refer to a vision which man has of Divine goodness, which no sophistries can becloud, and that vision is the vision of consciousness. Whatever may be the mere notions of certain men upon the subject, we can show that universal man believes in it with a faith which underlies all the phenomena of his moral life. This is manifested in the universally felt responsibility for moral evil. Why did the Infinite permit the introduction of sin? He must have foreseen it, and all the evils which, in the course of ages, would spring out of it must have been clear to His eye ; and seeing the whole, and being all-wise and all-powerful, surely He might have prevented it. Can you maintain the goodness of Him who allowed it to spring up in His universe, and work such ruin amidst His rational creation? Thus argues the impugner of our doctrine. We know of no reply more suitable than this : The deep consciousness of humanity charges itself with moral evil, and thereby clears its Maker. Man, everywhere, and in all periods, charges sin upon himself, and vindicates his Maker. Why else does he always hold his fellow responsible for crime, and readily render to him credit for his virtue? Why else does he feel the pangs of self-condemnation and remorse? Why else is he ever seeking to appease his Maker for his wrong-doings? Every sting of remorse, every tear of penitence, every attempt at expiation, that every breath of prayer

for absolution, attest his belief sin originates with him, and not with his Creator. Indeed, the social and religious phenomena of the world would be an inexplicable enigma if you denied the existence of this deep conviction.—*Ibid.*

[11129] There is another fact which shows man's intuitive faith in God's goodness, and that is the universally felt desirableness of continued existence. How many of the eight hundred million souls, which make up this generation, were the choice put to them to be as they are, or "not to be," would select the latter alternative? We presume few, very few, if any. Very few, even of the few great sufferers, would say, "Sooner than remain as we are, let our being end for ever—let every star go out—let us be quenched in eternal midnight." Life as it is, with its toils and diseases, its disappointments and its griefs, its sorrows and its cares, is generally felt to be desirable, or at any rate preferable to non-existence. I appeal to the deep heart of the man who impugns the goodness of his Maker. I say unto him, "Which will you have, my presumptuous and complaining brother, annihilation or your life as it is?" His every-day struggles to maintain his life would give the true answer. If there be such a thing as demonstration, these facts of every man's every-day experience demonstrate his heart's belief in Divine goodness: a belief this which rises superior to all intellectual reasonings. It is antecedent to all argument; and, as no argument has produced it, no argument can destroy it. Its roots are not in logical premises, but in the moral constitution of the soul. Your strongest antagonistic reasonings are to it as "darts" on the back of leviathan—"counted as stubble"—as the passing breeze to the mountain, stirring only things that grow on its surface; not touching its foundation. Or yet, once more: as the fleeting clouds to the sun; the biggest and blackest may roll over its disc, but touches it not—may obscure its brightness for a moment, but quenches not a ray. It is destined to shine with more or less luminousness for ever in the soul.—*Ibid.*

3 God's benignity is a fact ever before the eye of man's biblical faith.

[11130] The Bible reveals the wonderful goodness of God as conferring blessings of the most transcendent character. The material blessings which stream with unceasing flow from the fountain of Divine goodness upon the sentient creation are great; too great in number, variety, and magnitude for any finite intelligence to estimate. But the Bible regards them only as faint symbols of that goodness which it reveals. The showers that water the earth and revive the world; the river which blesses all "in its winding way," gives fruitfulness to whole countries, and bears the wealth of nations on its bosom; Canaan in its palmy days, and Eden in its prime; the light of the glorious heavens robing the universe in beauty, and wakening it into song—are all used as emblems of the richer blessings which the Scriptures unfold. These blessings are for *souls*—reasoning, God-reflecting, deathless souls, for whom these heavens were spread out and this earth was made. How great the worth of these blessings! They break the fetters of the spirit, and resuscitate its dormant power; they rekindle its lights and unseal its frozen fountains; they absolve its guilt, enthrone its conscience, reclaim it from its "prodigal" wanderings, and restore it to the arms of Infinite Love; they rebuild its temple, and make the shekinah gleam and the choir sing again; they translate it to "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Who shall tell of the glories of the skies? Who shall tell of the ever-increasing blessedness which the untold myriads of the saved shall enjoy through the progress of unnumbered ages? Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. These are blessings to remove all the evils of the human world, and to fill it with piety and joy.—*Ibid.*

[11131] When Israel's lawgiver, in ancient times, entreated Him to show His glory, what was the reply? Did He show the vastness of His universe, point out the extent of His possessions, the skill of His intellect, and the might of His arm? No. "I will cause My goodness to pass before thee," said the Eternal; as if He had said, "My glory is My goodness." Faith in His goodness is essential to spiritual union; for does not the harmony of communities consist ever in common governing sympathies? and must not these sympathies, to render the harmony perfect and lasting, be directed ever to God? But what can awaken them except the conviction that He "is good"? Destroy this conviction in heaven, and you destroy the common governing sympathies; and with the destruction of these would come furious anarchy and wild confusion. Holy souls are united as planets are united, by a mutual attraction to a common centre. God's goodness is that centre, binding spirit to spirit and realm to realm. Unfallen and sainted spirits circle around this fact, and they are one. Faith in His goodness is the necessary condition of spiritual culture. Love to God is the soul of virtue, the quickener of our spiritual faculties, and the spring of our holy deeds; but what but faith in His goodness can kindle in the heart this love for His character? Faith in His goodness is the solving principle of all intellectual difficulties touching His government. A thousand problems concerning the Divine procedure I meet with, on all hands, in my path of thought. The few with which I dare to wrestle master me; but my distracted and conquered spirit falls back upon the fact that God is good, and I have rest. Faith in His goodness is the under-foundation of my hope. When I think of my ignorance of to-morrow, and then muse upon the ages that await me, I feel appalled in the presence of the

awful and mysterious future, and I can only bear the prospect as I confide in the goodness of God.—*Ibid.*

24

GENTLENESS.

I. The Real Greatness implied in this Attribute.

1 Specially manifest in comparison with natural ideas of majesty.

[1132] Gentleness in a deity—what other religion ever took up such a thought? When the coarse mind of sin makes up gods and a religion by its own natural light, the gods, it will be seen, reveal both the coarseness and the sin together, as they properly should. They are made great as being great in force, and terrible in their resentments. They are mounted on tigers, hung about with snakes, cleave the sea with tridents, pound the sky with thunders, blow tempests out of their cheeks, send murrain upon the cattle, and pestilence on the cities and kingdoms of other gods—always raging in some lust or jealousy, or scaring the world by some vengeful portent.

Just opposite to all these, the great God and Creator of the world, the God of revelation, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ contrives to be a gentle being; even hiding His power, and withholding the stress of His will, that He may put confidence and courage in the feelings of His children. Let us not shrink, then, from this epithet of Scripture, as if it must imply some derogation from God's real greatness and majesty, for we are much more likely to reach the impression by its consideration that precisely here do His greatness and majesty culminate.—*Horace Bushnell, D.D.*

II. Nature and Significance of the Divine Gentleness.

[1133] What do we mean by gentleness? To call it sweetness of temper, kindness, patience, flexibility, indecisiveness, does not really distinguish it. We shall best come at the true idea, if we ask what it means when applied to a course of treatment? When you speak, for example, of dealing gently with an enemy, you mean that, instead of trying to force a point straight through with him, you will give him time, and ply him indirectly with such measures and modes of forbearance as will put him on different thoughts, and finally turn him to a better mind. Here, then, is the true conception of God's gentleness. It lies in His consenting to the use of indirection, as a way of gaining His adversaries. It means that He does not set Himself, as a Ruler, to drive His purpose straight through, but that, consciously wise and right, abiding in His purposes with majestic confidence, and expecting to reign with a finally established supremacy, He is only too great to fly at His adversary, and force him to the wall, if he does not instantly surrender; that, instead of coming down upon him thus, in a manner of direct onset, to carry his immediate submission by storm, He lays gentle siege to him, waiting for his willing assent and choice. He allows dissent for the present, defers to prejudice, watches for the cooling of passion, gives room and space for the weaknesses of our unreasonable and perverse habit to play themselves out, and so by leading us round, through long courses of kind but faithful exercise, He counts on bringing us out into the ways of obedience and duty freely chosen. Force and crude absolutism are thus put by; the irritations of a jealous littleness have no place; and the great God and Father, intent on making His children great, follows them and plies them with the gracious indirections of a faithful and patient love.—*Ibid.*

III. The Harmony subsisting in the Divine Nature of God, as the Powerful Governor of the Universe and the Gentle Ruler of Men.

[1134] See, some will say, what terrible forces we have ravening and pouring inevitably on about us day and night—roaring seas, wild hurricanes, thunder-shocks that split the heavens, earthquakes splitting the very world's body itself, heat and cold, drought and deluge, pestilences and deaths in all forms. What is there to be seen but a terrible, inexorable going on, still on, everywhere? The fixed laws everywhere refuse to bend, hearing no prayers; the great worlds fly through heaven as if slung by the Almighty like the smooth stone of David; and the atoms rush together in their undivertible affinities, like the simples of gunpowder touched by fire, refusing to consider anybody. Where, then, is the gentleness of such a God as we have signalled to us, in these unpitying, inexorable, fated powers of the world? Is it such a God that moves by indirection? Yes, and that all the more properly, just because these signs of earth and heaven, these undiverted, undivertible, all-demolishing, and terrible forces permit Him to do it. He now can hide His omnipotence, for a time, just at the point where it touches us; He can set His will behind His love for to-day and possibly to-morrow; simply because He has these majestic inexorabilities for the rear-guard of His mercies. For we cannot despise Him now, when He bends to us in favour, because it is the bending, we may see, of firmness. Able to use force, He can now use character, and time, and kindness. Real gentleness in Him, as in every other being, supposes counsel, order, end, and a determinate will. A weak man can be weak, and that is all. Not even a weak woman can be properly called gentle. No woman will so much impress others by her gentleness, when she is gentle, as one that has great firmness and decision. And so it is the firm, great God, He that goes on so

inflexibly in the laws, and the inexorable forces and causes of the creation—He it is that can, with so much better dignity, gentle Himself to a child or a sinner.—*Ibid.*

IV. The Efficiency of Persuasive Love in the Divine Gentleness as opposed to the Force of Arbitrary Despotism.

[11135] True gentleness is a character too great for any but the greatest and most divinely tempered souls. And yet how ready are men to infer that, since God is omnipotent, He must needs have it as a way of majesty, to carry all His points through to their issue by force, just as they would do themselves. What, in their view, is it for God to be omnipotent, but to drive His chariot where He will? Even Christian theologians, knowing that He has force enough to carry His points at will, make out pictures of His sovereignty not seldom that stamp it as a remorseless absolutism. They do not remember that it is man, he that has no force, who wants to carry everything by force, and that God is a being too great for this kind of infirmity; that, having all power, He glories in the hiding of His power; that, holding the worlds in the hollow of His hand, and causing heaven's pillars to shake at His reproof, He still counts it the only true gentleness for Him to bend, and wait, and reason with His adversary, and turn him round by His strong providence, till he is gained to repentance and a voluntary obedience.

But God maintains a government of law, it will be remembered, and enforces His law by just penalties, and what room is there for gentleness in a government of law? All room, I answer; for how shall He gain us to His law as good and right, if He does not give us time to make the discovery of what it is? To receive law because we are crammed with it is not to receive it as law, but only to receive it as force, and God would spurn that kind of obedience, even from the meanest of His subjects. He wants our intelligent, free choice of duty—that we should have it in love, nay, have it even in liberty. Doubtless it is true that He will finally punish the incorrigible; but He need not, therefore, like some weak, mortal despot, hurry up His force, and drive straight in upon His mark. If He were consciously a little faint-hearted He would, but He is great enough in His firmness to be gentle, and wait.—*Ibid.*

V. The Divine Motive involved in God's Gentle Treatment of Man.

1 The enhancement of man's spiritual and moral dignity and greatness as such.

[11136] God may have a different opinion of greatness from that which is commonly held by men—He certainly has. And what is more, He has it because He has a much higher respect for the capabilities of our human nature, and much higher designs concerning it, than we have ourselves. We fall into a mistake here also, under what we suppose to be the Christian gospel itself; as if it were a plan to bring down, not the loftiness of our pride, and the wilfulness of our rebellion, but the stature and majesty of our nature itself. Thus we speak of submitting or losing our will, being made weak and poor, becoming little children, ceasing to have any mind of our own, falling into nothingness and self-contempt before God. All which are well enough, as Christian modes of expression; but we take them too literally. They are good as relating to our wrong will and wrong feeling, not as relating to our capacity of will and feeling itself. On the contrary, while God is ever engaged to bring down our loftiness in evil and perversity, He is just as constantly engaged to make us loftier and stronger in everything desirable—in capacity and power and all personal majesty. We do not understand Him, in fact, till we conceive it as a truth profoundly real and glorious, that He wants to make us great—great in will, great in the breadth and honest freedom of our intellect, great in courage, enthusiasm, self-respect, firmness, superiority to things and matters of condition; great in sacrifice and beneficence; great in sonship with Himself; great in being raised to such common counsel, and such intimate unity with Him in His ends, that we do, in fact, reign with Him. Take, for example, the first point named, the will; for this, it will be agreed, is the spinal column even of our personality. Here it is that we assert ourselves with such frightful audacity in our sin. Here is the tap-root of our obstinacy. Hence come all the woes and disorders of our fallen state. Is it then His point to crush our will, or reduce it in quantity? If that were all, He could do it by a thought. No, that is not His way. His object is, on the contrary, to gain our will—gain it, that is, in such a manner as to save it, and make it finally a thousand-fold stouter in good and sacrifice than it has been, or could be, in wrong and evil. He will make it the chariot, as it were, of a great and mighty personality, inflexible, unsubduable, tremendous in good for ever. So of the intellect. Blinded by sin, wedded to all misbelief and false seeing, He never requires us to put violence upon it, never to force an opinion or a faith, lest we break its integrity; He only bids us set it for seeing, by a wholly right intent and a willingness even to die for the truth; assured that, in this manner, time, and providence, and cross, and Spirit, will bring it into the light, clearing, as in a glorious sun-rising, all the clouds that obscure it, and opening a full, broad heaven of day on its vision. And so it is that God manages to save all the attributes of force and magnanimity in us, while reducing us to love and obedience. Take such an example as Paul. Do we speak of will? why, he has the will-force of an empire in him. Of intelligence? let it be enough that he goes down into Arabia, and that in three years' time his mind has gone over all the course of Christian truth and doctrine, helped by no mortal,

but only by God's converse with him, and his own free thought. Of courage, firmness, self-respect? what perils has he met, what stripes endured, and what offscouring of the world has he been taken for, unhumbled still, and erect in the consciousness of his glorious manhood in Christ—sorrowful yet always rejoicing, poor yet making many rich, having nothing yet possessing all things; confounding Athens and Ephesus and the mob at Jerusalem, out-pleading Tertullus the lawyer, convincing Felix and Agrippa, commanding in the shipwreck, winning disciples to the faith in Cæsar's household. —*Ibid.*

[11137] Let us not omit the due adjustment of our conceptions to that which is the true pitch and scale of our magnanimity and worth as Christian men. It is easy at this point to flaunt our notions of dignity, and go off, as it were, in a gas of naturalism, prating of manliness or manly character. And yet there is such a thing to be thought of, revelation being judge, as being even great—great in some true scale of Christian greatness. A little, mean-minded, shuffling, cringing, timorous, selfish soul; would that many of our time could see how base the figure it makes. I will not undertake to say how little a man may be and be a Christian; for there are some natures that are constitutionally mean, and it may be too much to expect that grace will ennoble them all through in a day. Judging them in all charity, it must none the less be our conception for ourselves that God is calling us ever to be great, great in courage and candour, steadfast in honour and truth, immovable in our promises, heroic in our sacrifices, right and bold and holy—men whom He is training by His own great spirit for a world of great sentiment and will and might and majesty. For when we conceive the meeting in that world, and being there compeers with such majestic souls as Moses and Paul, nay, with thrones and dominions likewise, we do not seem, I confess, to be so much raised in the sense of our possible stature in good, as when we simply meditate God's gentle methods with us here, to raise our fallen manhood to its place; His careful respect for our liberty, the hidings of His power, the detentions of His violated feeling, the sending of His Son, and His Son's great cross, the silent intercessions of His Spirit—all the changes through which He is leading us, all the careful trainings of care and culture by which He is bringing us back at last, stage by stage, to the final erectness and glory of a perfect life. Even as when the mother eagle lifts her young upon the edge of her nest, holding them back that they may not topple off, and puts them fluttering there, and waving their pinions that they may get strength to lift their bodies, and finally to scale the empyreal heights. And when we shall be able, ascending thus our state of glory, to look back and trace all this in a clear and orderly review, what a wondrous and thrilling retrospect will it be! Conscious there of powers not broken down or crushed into servility, but of wills invigorated rather by submission, with what sense of inborn dignity and strength shall we sing, "Thy gentleness hath made us great!" All the littleness of our sin is now quite gone. We are now complete men, such as God meant us to be; great in the stature of our opinions, great in our feelings, principles, energies of will and joy, greatest of all in our conscious affinity with God and the Lamb.—*Ibid.*

VI. The Sublime Character maintained by God for Himself and His Government in this Attribute.

[11138] Easy enough were it for Him to lay His force upon, and dash our obstinacy to the ground. He might not thrust us into love, He could not into courage or confidence, but He might instantly crush out all wilfulness in us for ever. But He could not willingly reduce us in this manner to a weak and cringing submission. He wants no slaves about His throne. If He could not raise us into liberty, and make us great in duty, He would less respect both duty and Himself. He refuses, therefore, to subdue us unless by some such method that we may seem, in a certain other sense, to subdue ourselves. Most true it is that He carries a strong hand with us. He covers up no principle, tempers the exactness of no law. There is no connivance in His methods, no concealment of truths disagreeable and piercing, no proposition of compromise or halving in a way of settlement. His providence moves strong. His terrors flame out on the background of a wrathful sky. He thunders marvellously with His voice. And so His very gentleness stands glorious and strong and sovereignly majestic round us. Were He only soft or kind, bending like a willow to our wicked state, there were little to move and affect us even in His goodness itself. But when we look on Him as the Almighty Rock, the immovable Governor and Keeper of the worlds, girding Himself in all terrible majesty when He must, to let us know that impunity in wrong is impossible, then it is that we behold Him in the true meaning of His gentleness—how good! how firm! how adorably great! Come nigh, O thou sinning, weary prodigal, and acknowledge and receive in blissful welcome the true greatness of thy God! Be not jealous any more that religion is going to depress your manly parts, or weaken the strength of your high aspirations. In your lowest humiliations and deepest repentances you will be consciously raised and exalted. Every throb of heaven's life in your bosom will be only a throb of greatness. Every good affection, every holy action, into which your God may lead you, all your bosom struggles, your hungers, and tears, and prostrations, will be the travailing only of a princely birth, and a glorious sonship with God.—*Ibid.*

VII. THE GENTLENESS OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL.

[11139] It is the very genius of Christianity itself to prevail with man, or bring him back to obedience and life by a course of loving indirection. What we call the gospel is only a translation, so to speak, of the gentleness of God—a matter in the world of fact answering to a higher matter, antecedent, in the magnanimity of God. I do not say that this gospel is a mere effusion of Divine sentiment apart from all counsel and government. It comes by counsel older than the world's foundations. The salvation it brings is a governmental salvation. It is, at once, the crown of God's purposes and of His governmental order. And the gentleness of God must institute this second chapter of gracious indirection, because no scheme of rule could issue more directly in good without it. For it was impossible in the nature of things that mere law—precept driven home by the forces of penalty—should ever establish a really principled obedience in us. How shall we gladly obey and serve in love, which is the only obedience having any true character, till we have had time to make some experiments, try some deviations, sting ourselves in some bitter pains of trials, and so come round into the law freely chosen, because we have found how good it is; and, what is more than all, have seen how good God thinks it Himself to be, from what is revealed in that wondrous indirection of grace, the incarnate life and cross of Jesus. Here the very plan is to carry the precept of law by motives higher than force; by feeling and character and sacrifice. We could not be driven out of sin by the direct thrust of omnipotence; for to be thus driven out is to be in it still. But we could be overcome by the argument of the cross, and by voices that derive a quality from suffering and sorrow. And thus it is that we forsake our sins, at the call of Jesus and His cross, freely, embracing thus in trust what in wilfulness and ignorance we rejected.—*Ibid.*

25

JEALOUSY.

I. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN GOD'S JEALOUSY AND HIS ATTRIBUTES OF WRATH, LOVE, AND HOLINESS.

[11140] There are passages deriving the wrath from the jealousy, there are others which take the wrath or the jealousy no less decidedly either from, or in intimate connection with, the holiness. We refer, *e.g.*, to Isaiah x. 17; Ezek. xxviii. 22; Rev. xvi. 5–7; and above all to Joshua xxiv. 19: "He is an holy God, He is a jealous God" (אֱלֹהִים קְדֹשִׁים אֵל קַנּוֹא). Now this is an element of essential value, because it shows that, however closely we may lead up the wrath through the jealousy to the love, it need not follow that we bind ourselves to any denial of an eternal judicial condemnation. For however we may define the holiness—whether as the merely negative notion of purity, God's separation from all creaturely sin, or as the more positive notion of His separation from the creature as such, the quality which keeps Him on a platform of Being absolutely by Himself, elevating Him over all that is good as well as over all that is evil in the creature—we may take it, in a general sense, as ultimately the sign of the absoluteness of His Being. If God therefore is love, then God as holy is absolute love, the love that demands undivided possession, and that as matter of absolute right. That love prosecuting its impaired claims, and aiming at their recovery, is God's jealousy for or over the creature; that jealousy asserting itself against antagonism, and vindicating its claim of right to love denied, is the wrath; and, because a God who is not only love, but absolute in His love, cannot suffer either a rival in affection or a mockery of His rights, this wrath may ultimately turn into the שִׂנְאָה, or hate, which marks final rejection. It is the failure to appreciate the importance of this relation to the holiness as well as to the jealousy that has led writers of very different positions equally astray as regards the connection of the wrath with the love. Bartolomäi avers that if we make love, in any paramount sense, the definition of the Divine Being, we cannot posit a real wrath in the same nature.—*Stewart D. F. Salmond.*

[11141] God is jealous—God is love; the two attributes are one—one in fact and, indeed, one in term. Jealousy is love on fire, and the jealousy of God is love on fire. Consider this evil had attempted to wrest the darling of God from out of his power and keeping. Consider how God had formed a people for Himself to show forth His glory, His character; to reflect His being and His praise. Consider that Satan came into the garden of purity, in which God had placed His holy, hallowed one, for whom He had thought to do so much, whom He had loved so much; for this is what Satan, and sin, and evil do—they seek to wrest God's darling from Him—the being endowed with immortality, and the consecrated affections, the hallowed joys, the ennobled senses; they have taken all these, as the aboriginal settlers of a country are disturbed and displaced by an invader, so that all that God designed and did is cast out, and the portals wide open for the most unhallowed revellers to enter. Do you wonder that God is jealous?—*Rev. Paxton Hood.*

[11142] God is jealous, His love on fire, the Holy Spirit is love on fire—hell is love on fire. The one by gentle persuasion entreats; the other by forcible compulsion guards His holy fires; thus His fire folds inward and outward; inward to bless, outward to punish—so a calm death of holy life, a stormy fire of doom. Jealousy has its spring often in the most Divine and unselfish emotions. Jealousy is a passion

that depends for its character upon the fuel that gives its flame. Some such feelings are those of the apostle, when he says, "I was jealous for you with a godly jealousy." It is the sorrowing and pitying passion which would save, if it could, from the perdition and the doom, and unable to do so, or even seeking to do so, moves all its powers, takes all the minor emotions, faculties, and casts them into the flames of its love, bidding all blaze ; this is jealousy.—*Ibid.*

[11143] We have thus two great definitions of God now in view, which seem to stand in antagonism to each other, viz., *θεός ἀγάπη ἐστίν* and *ὁ θεός ἡμῶν πῦρ καταναλίσκον*. The question before is, how these two, God is love and God is a consuming fire, are to be harmonized. And the answer is, that the vinculum is found in this conception of the jealousy. Through that medial factor, the wrath is seen to be of love or accordant with it. The capital passage here is Deut. iv. 24, where the one is given as exegetical of the other : "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God" (אֵשׁ אֹכְלָה אֵל קַנָּא); and other passages (Zech. viii. 2 ; Ezek. xvi. 38, xxxvi. 6, xxxviii. 19, &c.), place the two in such juxtaposition that sometimes they appear well-nigh synonymous, and sometimes the jealousy seems given as the operative cause of the wrath. —*Stewart D. F. Salmond.*

II. Divine and Human Jealousy compared.

[11144] Now that this jealousy, which is also clearly presented as something real in God, and (with the abstraction of those accidents of distressing and suspicious feeling which are associated with our ideas of it) as essentially of the same kind in the Divine mind as in the human, is exhibited there as a certain energy of love, is proved by the familiar comparison of God's love to wedded love. This jealousy is, therefore, the Divine love bearing no rival, demanding a perfect response, asserting its disowned claims ; in short, the love that will be loved, and that with an undivided affection, in turn. The human jealousy, however, is two-sided ; it may be the jealousy of tenderness, but it may also be the jealousy of repulsion, or even of hate. The husband's jealousy over the wife is his love craving a full return ; if that return is refused, the love will still rise in a strong effort to recover, and becomes the jealousy that seeks and attracts ; but if this recuperative effort is also dishonoured, this jealousy of attraction may pass over into the jealousy of repulsion and hostility. So Scripture distinguishes very clearly between the jealousy for (קִנְאָה ל) and the jealousy against (קִנְאָה ב), *e.g.*, Phinehas jealous *for* the Lord (Num. xxv. 13), and Rachel jealous *against* her sister.—*Stewart D. F. Salmond.*

III. The Illustration of God's Jealousy in Christ.

[11145] Upon that wonderful thought, Divine love on fire, God is jealous. We feel, indeed, that there is no love where there is no fire, but let it burn with the white, not with the red heat. Christ was love on fire ; God so loved the world that he gave Him. Christ is a wondrous illustration of the jealousy of God.—*Rev. E. Paxton Hood.*

[11146] It was doubtless when standing in full view of the niched rock cut by Greeks for the idol Pan, face to face with the lustrous marble temple to "divine Augustus" of the Romans at Cæsarea Philippi, that Christ said, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" To Him belonged this costly adoration, squandered at the feet of idols ; and He is a jealous God. Our blessed Lord laments over the value of a soul whose devotion is snatched from Himself ; loves it all the more ; condemns it with the unspeakable condemnation of wounded love; asks, "Once lost, what shall man give in exchange to get it back again?" His "jealousy" drives Him to the cross, that He may win His own again—the love of a priceless human soul. Let human jealousy learn a lesson. Lift yourself up on a cross, that you may draw unto yourself the heart you think you have lost.—*F. Emery Haynes.*

IV. Human Excitation of the Divine Jealousy.

1 By vehement earthly affections.

[11147] Never did our great psychological poet Wordsworth utter a more profound truth than when he said—

> "God approves
> The depth, but not the tumult of the soul—
> A fervent, not ungovernable, love."

The ungovernable love is, indeed, the token and the sign of earthly mixture in the fuel which maintains the flame. If you love unwisely and vehemently, whatever it may be, you must accept the consequences as a proof of Divine jealousy. Alas ! in this world our most innocent as well as our most unholy things are in danger ; the storm which sweeps over our land may not only hurl down the palace of ambition and pride, it may extinguish the widow's lamp, and cast down the sacred altar and flame. Thus, in all things you must take refuge and shelter beyond things themselves, and this you cannot do it you love the things for themselves alone.—*Rev. E. Paxton Hood.*

2 By "chambers of imagery" within (Ezek. viii. 12).

[11148] Is there no reason to fear that we have "every man his chamber of imagery" within the soul? a world, a realm, and idol temple. There is a crypt where speculation is pursued amidst the works of God, but, amidst all the manifestations of His power, God is forgotten there ; there is a crypt where, amidst even the innocent and seemly affections of the

soul, the soul clings to the inferior, and God is forgotten there. These are the chambers of imagery within. Do you wonder that God is jealous?—*Ibid.*

3 By disturbed equilibrium of soul.

[11149] Do you want to love another than God supremely? do you enthrone an idea or an affection? Well, in that case, what can you do but take the consequences of your own affection? And all the punishment of sin in consequence. From our most innocent, down to our most corrupt affections, there is danger that in them, in our haste, we forget God. Turn to those Divine springs of spiritual strength, which may give the equipoise to your unbalanced being.—*Ibid.*

4 By disloyal forgetfulness of God.

[11150] "God jealous." He is jealous of sin, and, being jealous of sin, He is jealous of all aberrations from Himself. He is jealous of love, of power, of knowledge; see how He is constantly reminding man of his weakness as He incarnates his strength; and God is constantly absorbing man's knowledge, power, and love to Himself.—*Ibid.*

26

LONG-SUFFERING.

I. Its Design.

[11151] 1. To draw men to seek for repentance (Rom. ii. 4; Joel ii. 13, 14), for the full enjoyment of salvation (2 Pet. iii. 15). 2. To exhibit the riches of God's mercy (Psa. lxxxvi. 15). One of the tender manifestations of infinite goodness. 3. To vindicate the righteousness of His justice, when judgment has been so long delayed. God does not lose the honour of His forbearance, if sinners refuse to receive the benefit of it (Isa. v. 3, 4)—*G. S. Bowes.*

II. Its Manifestations.

[11152] 1. In bearing long with the provocations of mankind, even those of His own people (Psa. lxxviii. 38; Neh. ix. 40). 2. In tender yearning still to plead with them (Jer. iv. 14, xiii. 27; Micah vi. 3; Luke xiii. 8, 9; Hosea vi. 4). 3. In giving warnings of judgment before its execution (Gen. vi. 3; Jonah iii. 4). 4. In long delaying the threatened judgment (Gen. vi. 3). 5. In the unwillingness to execute it, when it is sent at last (Hos. xi. 8, 9).—*Ibid.*

III. Its Abuse.

1 Divine long-suffering is abused when man presumes upon it.

[11153] The sun by the action of the heat makes wax moist and mud dry, hardening the one while it softens the other, by the same operation producing exactly opposite results; thus, from the long-suffering of God, some derive benefit, and others harm; some are softened, while others are hardened.—*Theodoret.*

[11154] Though patience and long-suffering is one of the bright glories of the Divine character, yet—1. The Lord does at times come forth in righteous severity to punish sin—Lot's wife, the man that gathered sticks on the sabbath, Nadab and Abihu, Uzza, Ananias and Sapphira, Herod Agrippa, &c. When God does thus arise to judgment, He would teach men not to presume upon His forbearance, whilst there is nothing in such righteous severity to forbid hope in His goodness. The punishment of a few is the best warning to a many. 2. Long-suffering on the part of God is founded on His grace and mercy; not on any obligation, as if He were bound to bear long with the rebellious. But who may presume to tell how long such mercy may endure? God's forbearance is lasting, but it is not everlasting. 3. In the time of God's patience sinners should remember His final and irreversible judgments are advancing towards them, if slowly, not less surely; and the longer the delay of judgment, the heavier and more terrible it will be when at last the cloud breaks. 4. Nothing can be a higher provocation against a God of love than to trample upon His forbearance and long-suffering. Nothing can ensure a more terrible vengeance than to reject God's tender mercies, and abuse His loving-kindness and long-suffering.—*G. S. Bowes.*

[11155] The prolonged trifling with it, tends, naturally and powerfully, to an effect directly the contrary of repentance — naturally and powerfully, we say; it does so by mere habit, if there were nothing more. It does so by establishing a heedless kind of notion (or rather a habit of feeling without thought), as if all the good we receive were just what belongs to our being and nature—only what it is proper for us to have, since we exist—something due to our condition, rather than any direct bounty of God. It does so by turning many of God's mercies, in succession, to a wrong use—and every such instance, being a sin, puts us further from Him—adds to the thickness of the separating wall. It does so by creating a delusive sense of impunity. It may do so by introducing into the mind an express and even speculative undervaluation of the Divine mercies, admitted and cherished to do away the sense of guilt. It may at length do so (that is, harden the spirit) by bringing upon it, possible infliction of God Himself, a judicial insensibility.

[11156] Myriads have been ruined for ever by abusing the long-suffering of God. They never intended to brave His wrath, nor to enter into His presence in an unprepared state; but they saw so little cause for immediate alarm that they ventured on a little further and a little further, until they had gone too far to retrace

their steps. The servant in the parable did not say, "My Lord will never return," but "My Lord delayeth His coming." He thought that he might have a little more time for drunkenness and sin before the master arrived, and then could put all in order for his reception; but his master came unexpectedly, "cut him asunder, and appointed him his portion where was weeping and gnashing of teeth." Have you ever noticed, my hearers, that our Saviour seldom warns us against a deliberate rejection of the gospel offers? He knew that such guilt would be rare, and almost all His solemn cautions are against abusing the long-suffering of our God, and hardening ourselves in presumptuous security. "How shall we escape if we neglect" (not reject, but neglect) "so great salvation?" "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we let them slip." "While they cry peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh." And how often does the Saviour call upon us, "to watch," and warn us that His coming will be "as a thief in the night"! Jesus Christ had made but very little provision in His gospel against infidelity, nor taken much pains to guard against a deliberate rejection of Himself, for He knew that these were not the evils most to be dreaded; and that far more than all, that presumptuous procrastination, which encourages itself from the long-suffering of God to go on carelessly in sin, was to be feared.—*W. H. Lewis, D.D.*

IV. The Greatness of Divine Long-suffering.

1 Specially apparent in the consideration of the dire antagonism between infinite holiness and human sin.

[11157] There are two philosophies of the Divine nature, and it makes much difference in our estimate of the patience of God which we adopt. One makes God inaccessible to suffering. False ideas of perfection cause them to lift Him above suffering, as if it were a weakness. But this, in fact, either takes away personality, making God an abstraction, or it represents Him as so devoid of sensibility that no man can yearn after or love Him. In order to raise God into inconceivable perfectness, philosophers have clothed Him with such impassive traits that no man could desire Him.

The other view, which is the scriptural view, clothes God with sensibilities, but vastly more acute and deep and strong than men's. Love and sympathy and pity are not less real in God than in man, but more real. God is not only as much as man, but more than he in everything that is excellent. There is no such indignation at dishonour and meanness and wickedness as that which dwells in the bosom of God. It is said to burn to the lowest hell. Bring before any truly noble man some ineffable meanness, not against himself, but against a helpless one, and he knows what that expression means. He is so affronted by the outrage that his whole better nature is stirred up within him. And if man, who is yet selfish, and drawn toward the earth, can be so aroused at the sight of such things, what must be the tides that move through the heart of God at the sight of the same things! If God be one that says, "I saw the end from the beginning; I know that all is going right, and I will not trouble myself with these matters," we might as well have no God, so far as His influence upon us is concerned; but if He be a Father who declares that there is not a thing that pertains to our welfare of which He is not cognisant and which He does not control, then what must be the nature of the experience of the Divine mind, in the world-long administration of His government, over such a race as this!—*Beecher.*

V. The Proof of Omnipotence conveyed in this Attribute.

[11158] Long-suffering is the greatest exhibition of power on this side the day of judgment. It is our evidence that God now possesses all that God shall then exercise. And when I am told that God is long-suffering, and no limitations are placed on the attribute, you bring before me a picture as overpowering in its details as stupendous in its outlines. I see at once that, if God be long-suffering, then God can punish every sin. What then? Vice may seem to carry it over virtue; and I may search in vain, through all that is passing on a disordered creation, for tokens that a moral government is still upheld in its vigour; and the infidel may tauntingly refer to the triumph of evil, and infer that God has been compelled to abandon one world at least to the dominion of His foes; but fastening on the long-suffering of the Creator, I am proof against all doubts as to the power of the Creator: He could not be long-suffering unless He could punish: He could not punish unless He were supreme.—*H. Melvill, B.D.*

[11159] Towards each of us there has been the exercise of long-suffering on the part of the Almighty. Each of us has provoked the wrath of the Lord; and yet upon none of us has that wrath as yet come down in its fury. So that, if the great demonstration of God's power be God's long-suffering, then each amongst us may find in himself that demonstration in all its completeness. And thus it may be of all things the most possible that, after dwelling amazedly on the stupendous achievements which God hath wrought in producing and actuating the systems of the universe; after summoning planets and suns, and seas and mountains to give in their tribute of acknowledgment to the might of Him who "spake and it was done, who commanded and they stood fast;" oh, we say, it is of all things the most possible, that angels may be looking down upon myself as the crowning point of proof; and not because I am marvellous as the compound of matter and

spirit, of mortal and immortal ; and not because I inherit a nature which hath been taken into absolute union with the Divine ; but because I have sinned, and yet breathe ; because I have defied the living God, and the earth has not cleaved, and the torrent has not rushed, and the bolt has not fallen ; because I have been long-offending, and God has been long-suffering —therefore may they regard me as out and out the most perfect demonstration that the power of their Lord is great ; and assign me, because spared in mine offences, a place amongst the witnesses to the almightiness of their Maker, which they give not to the marchings of planets, nor to the gorgeousness of light, nor to their own beauty as ethereal things, and rapid and masterful.—*Ibid.*

[11160] We may have all read of such instances as of a man, in the hardihood of his atheism, challenging, so to speak, the Deity to prove His existence by striking him to the earth. "If there be a God, let Him show Himself by smiting me, His denier." Now, you can hardly picture to yourselves a being exercising over himself so perfect a command that, with all the apparatus of fiery reply at his disposal, he should not answer the challenge by levelling him who utters it with the ground. Can you measure to me the effort which it would be to a creature to keep the thunder silent and to chain up the lightning? Yet the atheist is allowed to depart unscathed ; and the proof of God's existence, which would have seemed pre-eminently calculated to overspread a neighbourhood with terrible conviction, is mysteriously withheld, so that the blasphemer can insultingly refer to his own fierce appeal as bearing witness that there is either no God or none who concerns Himself with what is done on this earth. But what lesson does the believer in a God derive from this absence of all answer to the daring appeal? We tell you that he learns God's might a hundredfold more from the unbroken silence of the firmament than he would do from the hoarse tones of vengeance rushing down to the destruction of the rebel. The atheist overthrown—this is as nothing to the exhibition of the atheist spared. It would have been as nothing that God should have launched the bolt — the prodigy, the marvel, whose height I cannot scale, whose depth I cannot fathom, it is that God should have withheld the bolt. I should have learnt God powerful over the elements had I seen the blasphemer stretched a blackened corpse at my feet : I learn God powerful over Himself when the questioner of His Deity passes on uninjured. A finite being might have struck : I think that none but an infinite could forbear. So that, if you give yourselves to the careful examination of the case, you must allow that in no voice could there have been so much divinity as in silence.—*Ibid.*

[11161] When I think on the difference between God's creating a world and God's pardoning a sin—the one done without effort, the other demanding an instrumentality terribly sublime ; the one effected by a word, the other wrought out in agony and blood on a quaking earth and beneath a darkened heaven—oh, the world created is as nothing by the side of the sin blotted out ; that God can pardon is at the very summit of what is wonderful ; and therefore then, O Lord, do I most know Thee as the omnipotent when I behold in Thee the long-suffering.—*Ibid.*

27

MERCIFULNESS.

I. The Glory of this Attribute.

[11162] Mercy is to march the first, so far and in that sense as infinity admits precedency, and to take up her seat in the highest throne ; as the fairest flower in His garland of majesty, the brightest ray that issues out of that unapproachable light, the loveliest gem that crowns all His boundless, immeasurable, imperial glory. —*R. Bolton*, 1637.

[11163] It is, in reality, the highest glory of Him before whom suns and stars, angels and archangels, are in themselves "less than nothing, and vanity," that He visits with His consolation the prisoner in his dungeon, the widow and fatherless in their affliction ; that He marks the first rising to return of the prodigal exile, and thrills joy through the very heaven of His holiness over one sinner that repenteth.—*C. J. Vaughan.*

II. Its Qualities and Characteristics.

[11164] The mercy of God is—(1) *Sovereign*, Hosea ii. 23 ; Rom. ix. 15–18 ; not, *i.e.*, that Divine mercy arbitrarily acts without any reason but mere will, but that such reasons are not disclosed to us, and that God acts in all things as a sovereign, whilst yet He is a Being delighting in mercy. (2) *Abounding*, 1 Pet. i. 3 ; both in the multitude and greatness of surpassing and continued kindness. "Plenteous," Psa. cxxx. 8 ; "Great," Num. xiv. 18 ; "Rich," Eph. ii. 4 ; "Great unto the heavens," Psa. xcvii. 10 ; yea, "great above the heavens," Psa. cviii. 4 ; "Filling all the earth," Psa. cxix. 64 ; "Over all God's works," Psa. cxlv. 8. (3) *Tender*, Psa. xxv. 6 ; Luke i. 78 ; beautiful word — "tender mercy," like loving-kindness," Psa. li. 1, ciii. 4 ; Jas. v. 11. (4) *Sure*, Isa. lv. 3 ; Micah vii. 20 ; mercy and truth are the two pillars of the covenant—what is "mercy to Abraham" is "truth to Jacob." (5) *Everlasting*. "From everlasting to everlasting," Psa. lxxxix. 28, ciii. 9–17.—*G. S. Bowes.*

[11165] It is "great ;" it is "plenteous ;" it is "abundant ;" it is "everlasting ;" a dozen times we are told that it "endureth for ever ;"

it is "high as heaven," nay, "above the heavens," and the "earth is full" of it; God is "rich" in it; He "magnifies" it; He "delights in" it; while, as for the man who is its object, it "follows" him through life; it "compasses him about," "crowns" him like a coronal.—*Dykes.*

[11166] The mercy of God is infinite; as His nature is infinite, so are each of His attributes. His "understanding is infinite" (Psa. cxlvii. 5), and so His knowledge, wisdom, justice, holiness, and goodness, and likewise His mercy; it is so in its nature and in its effects; and this appears both by bestowing an infinite good on men, which is Christ, who is the gift of God, and owing to the love, grace, and mercy of God; and who though, as man, is infinite; yet, in His Divine person infinite; and as such given (Isa. ix. 6), and by His delivering them from an infinite evil, sin: sin, as an act of the creature, is finite; but objectively, infinite, as it is committed against God, the infinite Being (Psa. li. 4), and therefore is not only infinite with respect to number (Job xxii. 5), but with respect to its object, and also with respect to punishment for it; the demerit of it is eternal death; and this cannot be endured at once, or answered for in a short time; it is carried on *ad infinitum*, without end; and therefore spoken of as everlasting and eternal. Now mercy has provided for the forgiveness of sin, and for the deliverance of men from the punishment of it, and from being liable to it (Heb. viii. 12).—*Rev. John Gill, M.A.*

[11167] The mercy of God is eternal; the eternity of mercy is expressed in the same language as the eternity of God Himself; and, indeed, since it is His nature, it must be as eternal as He Himself is (see Psa. xc. 2, ciii. 17); it is from everlasting, as His love is; which is to be proved by the instances of it, called His tender mercies, which have been ever of old, or from everlasting (Psa. xxv. 6). The council and covenant of peace were in eternity; in which the scheme of reconciliation to God was formed, and the method of it settled, which supposed them enemies, and so considered them as fallen creatures, and objects of mercy; and, indeed, the covenant of grace, which was from everlasting, is a superstructure of mercy (Psa. lxxxix. 1–3); and since mercy is from everlasting, not anything in time can be the cause of it; not the misery of the creature by the fall of Adam, nor works of righteousness done after conversion; nor the obedience and sufferings of Christ; things in time. And the mercy of God is to everlasting in its fruits and effects; it is kept with Christ, and for Him, the Mediator of the covenant; into whose hands are put all the promises and blessings of mercy; called, therefore, "the sure mercies of David" (Psa. lxxxix. 24, 28; Isa. lv. 3). Even temporal blessings, which flow from the mercy of God, are new every morning, and are daily continued; and spiritual ones always remain; the mercy of God never departs from His people, notwithstanding their backslidings; and though He chides them for them, and hides His face from them, yet still He has mercy on them (Psa. lxxxix. 30–33; Isa. liv. 6–10; Jer. iii. 12, 14).

The mercy of God is immutable, as He Himself is, and His love also; and therefore the objects of it are not consumed (Mal. iii. 6): it is invariably the same in every state and condition into which they come; it is, as the Virgin Mary expresses it, from generation to generation, without any variation or change (Luke i. 50).—*Ibid.*

III. Its Manifestations.

1 In patience and forbearance towards mankind.

[11168] That men are opposed to the character and government of God; that they continually dishonour His name, violate His laws, so far as they know them, and are guilty of manifold iniquities towards each other, cannot be rationally questioned. The conduct which strict justice on the part of God would dictate, as the proper retribution of these crimes, can be no other than severe and immediate punishment. This punishment, however, we do not find executed. On the contrary, He continues them in life, notwithstanding all their provocations, and surrounds them with an endless multitude of blessings. In this part of Divine providence, therefore, we find a direct exercise of mercy; that is, kindness to guilty beings; and this repeated in instances innumerable, instances so multiplied, and so constantly recurring, as to constitute a primary and essential characteristic of the government of God over mankind.—*T. Dwight, LL.D.*

2 In the inestimable sacrifice for sin.

[11169] The incarnation, life, and death of Christ were undertaken and accomplished by Him with a complete knowledge not only of the distresses which He was to undergo, but also of the character of those for whom they were to be undergone. He knew perfectly well that they were sinners, rebels, and apostates, condemned and ruined; utterly indisposed to believe His testimony, to accept His person, or to become interested in His indignation. He perfectly knew that to make them even reconciled to Him, or grateful for the immense benefits which He proffered, it would be necessary, after all He had done, to send the Spirit of grace into the world, to give them a new heart and a better mind. Of course He engaged in this wonderful employment, from compassion only, to the miserable beings whom He came to redeem. As His own character and conduct are therefore the strongest possible exhibition of mercy, so God, who gave Him up to all these sufferings for this end, and to whom He was plainly the dearest object in the universe, has in this transaction equally exhibited mercy as His own character.—*Ibid.*

[11170] God's mercy buries our sins. No one is in the funeral with mercy, and if any one should meet her on returning from the burial and ask her, "Mercy, where didst thou bury our sins?" her answer would be, "I do not remember." When the merciful God forgives the sin, He forgets it—"For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."—*Rev. W. Jones.*

IV. Its Blessed Influence.

1 The contemplation of Divine mercy calms the perturbed souls, and vanquishes despair.

[11171] Thy mercy, Lord, is like the morning sun,
Whose beams undo what sable night hath done;
Or like a stream, the current of whose course,
Restrained awhile, runs with a swifter force.
Oh, let me glow beneath those sacred beams,
And often bathe me in those silver streams!
To thee alone my sorrows shall appeal:
Hath earth a wound too hard for heaven to heal?—*Francis Quarles.*

[11172] You cannot believe too much in God's mercy. You cannot expect too much at His hands. He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." No sin is so great but that, coming straight from it, a repentant sinner may hope and believe that all God's love will be lavished upon him, and the richest of God's gifts granted to his desires. Even if our transgression be aggravated by a previous life of godliness, and have given the enemies great occasion to blaspheme, as David did, yet David's penitence may in our souls lead on to David's hope, and the answer will not fail us. Let no sin, however dark, however repeated, drive us to despair of ourselves, because it hides from us our loving Saviour. Though beaten back again and again by the surge of our passions and sins, like some poor shipwrecked sailor sucked back with every retreating wave and tossed about in the angry surf, yet keep your face towards the beach where there is safety; and you will struggle through it all, and, though it were but on some floating boards and broken pieces of the ship, will come safe to land. He will uphold you with His Spirit, and take away the weight of sin that would sink you, by His forgiving mercy, and bring you out of all the weltering waste of waters to the solid shore.—*Maclaren.*

V. Its Abuse.

[11173] Mercy, like time, flows on with a smooth and easy current, and too often, alas! is as little regarded as that. Mercy smiles upon us with the dawn of every day, and with the return of every night draws a curtain of rest and protection about us.—*H. Grove.*

[11174] God's mercy is a holy mercy, which knows how to pardon sin, not to protect it; it is a sanctuary for the penitent, not for the presumptuous.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

[11175] What is the Divine grace which may not be turned into corruption? To the impure all is impure. Everything withers under their breath, everything is corrupted by their touch. What is better, what more vitalizing than air? But eliminate one of the elements which compose it, there remains only a poison. Well, there are beings who know how to extract only a decomposing venom from the best gifts of God. Speak to the sectarian of the Divine mercy, of that immense mercy which, covering all our faults, should draw from us outbursts of repentance and abasement: he believes in it, but it is in order to nourish his pride, it is to congratulate himself on being the privileged object of the Divine favour, it is to let fall on others, from the height of his frozen spirituality, a look the barrenness of which no tear of compassion has veiled. That grace which should open his heart and make floods of pity and mercy to pour forth, has only contracted it more. Speak to the false heart of the love of God: he will believe it, but it will be to shelter his disorders under the veil of the Divine goodness; he will accept the forgiveness, but it will be to dishonour it.—*Eugène Bersier.*

VI. False Views concerning the Mercy of God.

[11176] "A God all mercy is a God unjust." When did God appear a God all mercy? Not in the fall; for the solemn threatening He then pronounced was carried into execution, and death passed upon all men, for that all sinned. Not in the flood—destruction of the cities of the plain. Not at the giving of the law. Not at the destruction of Jerusalem.—*Expository Outlines of Parables.*

VII. Lessons to be derived from this Divine Attribute as displayed in the Mediation of our Redeemer.

1 It teaches us to strive and exemplify in our lives the tender mercy of God, towards one another.

[11177] In the mediation of our Redeemer we are presented with a perfect example of the nature and effects of this most lovely attribute; furnished by a life of which this attribute was the soul and spirit; a life pure and excellent beyond all precedent and all praise; and closed by a death full of shame and agony, voluntarily undergone from mere compassion to this perishing world, and beautified and adorned with this consummation of benevolence in its most Divine form. In this we indeed behold "the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Here we are drawn with cords of love, that we may run after Him. With these motives, with this Example before us, can we fail to "forgive men their trespasses against us," and "be kind to the evil and unthankful?"

Can we fail to "deal our bread to the hungry," and "to bring the poor that are cast out into our houses?" When we see the naked must we not be willing to "cover him"? must we not be unable to "hide ourselves from our own flesh"? When this importunate and seductive world intrudes itself into the mind, and is insidiously busy in establishing its ascendency over the heart; when wealth is riveting its chains, to fasten us in bondage; when ambition invites us to the high places of power and distinction, and promises that we shall be as gods in grandeur and glory; when pleasure informs us that we have "much goods laid up for many years," and bids us "take our ease, eat, drink, and be merry;" in a word, when temptation, sense, and sin crowd around us, and prepare us to absorb all our affections in selfish gratification; let us look to the table of Christ, and remember and behold there what He has done for us. If we are not hardened indeed, if we are not literally "dead in trespasses and sins," we shall find it difficult, and I hope impossible, not to go and in some measure do likewise. We shall, like Him, "love our enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again;" we shall "bless them that curse us, and pray for them who despitefully use us and persecute us." "Then shall we indeed be the children of our Father who is in heaven, who maketh His sun to arise on the evil as well as on the good. Then shall our light break forth as the morning, and our health spring forth speedily: our righteousness shall go before us, and the glory of the Lord shall be our rereward."—*T. Dwight.*

28

PATIENCE.

I. Its Character and Natural Distinctions.

[11178] It is a part of the Divine goodness and mercy, yet differs from both. God, being the greatest goodness, hath the greatest mildness; mildness is always the companion of true goodness, and the greater the goodness the greater the mildness. Who so holy as Christ, and who so meek? God's slowness to anger is a branch or slip from His mercy. "The Lord is . . . . full of compassion, slow to anger" (Psa. cxlv. 8). It differs from mercy in the formal consideration of the object; mercy respects the creature as miserable, patience respects the creature as criminal; mercy pities him in his misery, and patience bears with the sin which engendered that misery, and is giving birth to more.

Again, mercy is one end of patience, his long-suffering is partly to glorify his grace, so it was in Paul (1 Tim. i. 16). As slowness to anger springs from goodness, so it makes mercy the butt and mark of its operations; He waits that He may be gracious (Isa. xxx. 18). Goodness sets God upon the exercise of patience, and patience sets many a sinner on running into the arms of mercy. That mercy which makes God ready to embrace returning sinners makes Him willing to bear with them in their sins, and wait their return.

It differs also from goodness in regard of the object. The object of goodness is every creature; angels, men, all inferior creatures, to the lowest worm that crawls upon the ground. The object of patience is primarily man, and secondarily, those creatures that respect men's support, conveniency, and delight: but they are not the objects of patience, as considered in themselves, but in relation to man, for whose use they were created, and therefore God's patience to them is properly His patience with man. The lower creatures do not injure God, and therefore are not the objects of His patience but as they are forfeited by man, and man deserves to be deprived of them: as man in this regard falls under the patience of God, so do those creatures which are designed for man's good. That patience which spares man spares other creatures for him, which were all forfeited by man's sin, as well as his own life, and are rather the testimonies of God's patience than the proper objects of it.—*Charnock.*

II. Its Manifestations.

1 In the unhurried order of natural creation.

[11179] He shows us this patience first as the Maker of all things. You find it in the slow building and furnishing of the outer worlds; the slow succession of geologic ages; the slow procession in ascending ranks, one only so little above another, of the races of plants and animals, affording an epoch for a reptile or a fern; the slow preparation of the planet for its final purpose in the rearing of an immortal family, the revelation of the spiritual glory of the Divine Man in the flesh, and the manifestation, by that incarnation, of a new earth, with the sons of God for its kings and priests. When He would lay beds of solid rock as the pillars of a continent, making a thousand years as one day, He deposits them of the small sand, grain by grain. When He would fix the beams of His chambers in the waters, He chooses very rarely for mechanics the gigantic forces of earthquake or deluge, but He piles together countless legions of small skeletons till the coral masonry makes at last the mightiest architecture. When He would burnish and adorn some cavern with the splendour of crystals that outshine all the pictures of art and man's device, He drips into the dark gallery, drop by drop, for centuries, the waters that He holds in the hollow of His hand. He does not warm the air and earth at once by firebolts, but by silent sunbeams. He does not moisten the land by waterspouts and cataracts, but by beads of dew, night after night, making small the drops of rain, and sprinkling them upon the

pastures and the wilderness patiently.—*F. D. Huntington.*

2 In restraining His wrath against the sins of men.

[11180] We all know well enough what those things are that try and irritate us, in the common intercourse of life, and where our patience gives way. We know what the provocation is when our motives are misjudged, or our self-respect is insulted; when mean calculations take advantage of our friendship; when our children are forgetful or wilful, our pupils dull, our servants careless, our neighbours arrogant, our beneficiaries unthankful or impertinent. We all know the sting that hurts us in contempt, in estrangement, in forgetfulness. To be crowded upon by intrusion, or curiosity, or conceit; to be patronized; to be contradicted; these are some of the tests of our patience. Now, all these hateful things, in every instance, are known to God. They are full in His sight. Just so far as they are real offences at all, they are offences against Him before they are to us. He does not overlook them, but looks directly at them all. There is no haughty indifference with God to little faults, or little vexations. The smallest sin is magnified to Him ten thousandfold. By as much as His spirit is holier, intenser, perfect altogether in its sensitive and glorious purity, by just so much these little wrongs and transgressions hurt Him more keenly, and are aggravated in His sight. His sympathies, His abhorrence, His indignation, are infinite; but so is His patience. These particular annoyances and stupidities, these cruelties and negligences, these breaches of charity and decency, these meannesses, lusts, debaucheries, vanities—do you suppose that they are less really abominable to God than to you—the best of you? He looks on and sees the weak injured, the innocent oppressed, a proud master abusing a feeble victim. Why does He not strike down the insolent libertine, and break to pieces the wicked system, and disperse to the four winds the banded sects of error and unbelief? He knows why — He waits. Never imagine one sin escapes Him. The cries of those which have reaped while the pleasure-seekers have been wanton have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. He sees the tyrants, the traitors, the hardened profligates, living out their many days, and some of them dying natural deaths in their beds, the Alvas and Torquemedas, small and great, of every age—His judgment-seat not moved forward one hair's breadth to meet them this side the grave.—*Ibid.*

[11181] How many are the sins against knowledge, as well as those of ignorance; presumptuous sins as well as those of infirmity! How numerous those of omission and commission! It is above the reach of any man's understanding to conceive all the blasphemies, oaths, thefts, adulteries, murders, oppressions, contempt of religion, the open idolatries of Turks and heathens, the more spiritual and refined idolatries of others. Add to those the ingratitude of those that profess His name—their pride, earthliness, carelessness, sluggishness to Divine duties; and in every one of those a multitude of provocations; the whole man being engaged in every sin—the understanding contriving it, the will embracing it, the affections complying with it, and all the members of the body instruments in the acting the unrighteousness of it; every one of these faculties bestowed upon men by Him are armed against Him in every act; and in every employment of them there is a distinct provocation, though centred in one sinful end and object. What are the offences which all the men of the world receive from their fellow-creatures to the injuries God receives from men, but as a small dust of earth to the whole mass of earth and heaven too? What multitudes of sins is one profane wretch guilty of in the space of twenty, forty, fifty years! Who can compute the vast number of his transgressions, from the first use of reason to the time of the separation of his soul from his body; from his entrance into the world to his exit?—*Charnock.*

3 In long bearing with man's ingratitude.

[11882] Take the broadest divisions of the human family—races and nations. From their beginning in the East, as an eastern shepherd leads out his flocks, the Everlasting Father has brought His tribes out of their native sheepcotes and stationed them here and there over the globe. Slowly they crept westward, in their pastoral or commercial or military migrations, from one line of valleys to another, along the rivers, around the shores of the Mediterranean, across southern deserts, up among the northern forests, through the gaps of mountains, sailing for islands, navigating oceans, colonizing and populating both the hemispheres. Sometimes the advancing wave was checked and thrown back a thousand years. Sometimes the pioneers halted in their march, and stood still for generations. Vast territories, with fertile soils and blooming vegetation, with the wealth of navies and harvests in their bosom, were waiting to receive them; and some are waiting still. God waited His own good time for occupying them with human industry. Nor is this the chief exercise of His patience. One after another these nations have broken away from their Creator's commandment. For each one of them He kindled the light of conscience or of revelation, to show them the way, and they shut their eyes upon it. Every national life has grown corrupt. No sooner have they come to prosperity than they have come to luxury, idlenesss, and the beginnings of decay. They have tempted and betrayed each other; cheated, fought, enslaved, murdered each other. The strong have oppressed the weak, the cunning over-reached the simple, the rich despised the poor, the poor hated and envied the rich. None

of them have been permanently pure, just, and good—no, not one.—*F. D. Huntington.*

4 In long waiting for man's repentance.

[11183] All the notices and warnings that God gives men of either public or personal calamities is a continual invitation to repentance. This was the common interpretation the heathens made of extraordinary presages and prodigies, which showed as well the delays as the approaches of judgments. What other notion but this, that those warnings of judgments witness a slowness to anger, and a willingness to turn His arrows another way, should move them to multiply sacrifices, go weeping to their temples, sound out prayers to their gods, and show all those other testimonies of a repentance, which their blind understandings hit upon. If a prince should sometimes in a light and gentle manner punish a criminal, and then relax it, and show him much kindness, and afterwards inflict upon him another kind of punishment as light as the former, and less than was due to his crime, what could the malefactor suspect by such a way of proceeding but that the prince by those gently repeated chastisements had a mind to move him to a regret for his crime? And what other thoughts could men naturally have of God's conduct, that he should warn them of great judgments, send light afflictions, which are testimonies rather of a patience than of a severe wrath, but that it was intended to move them to a relenting and a breaking off their sins by working righteousness? Though Divine patience doth not in the event induce men to repentance, yet the natural tendency of such a treatment is to mollify men's hearts, to overcome their obstinacy, and no man hath any reason to judge otherwise of such a proceeding. —*Charnock.*

III. Its Incomparableness.

[11884] Admire the patience of God. It is matchless and incomparable. 1. Compare it with the patience of the holiest men on earth. Never was there a man like Moses, for meekness, patience, and long-suffering; yet he could not bear with the provocations of the Israelites; when they provoked his meek spirit, "he spake unadvisedly with his lips." Oh, how impatient was he? "Ye rebels," says he, "must we fetch you water out of this rock?" And, in his passion, "he smote the rock twice." Again, though the apostles James and John were good men, yet how ready were they to call for "fire from heaven" upon the Samaritans, because they refused to receive their Lord and Master! A slight affront in comparison of what He receives from many among us. Mr. Bolton says, if the most tender-hearted man should sit but one hour in the throne of God, and look down on the earth, as God doth continually, and see what abominations are done in that hour, he would undoubtedly, in the next, set all the world on fire. 2. Compare it with the patience of angels. They could not bear with sinners as God doth. When God promised an angel to conduct the children of Israel into Canaan, and to drive out their enemies, and gave this reason why he declined to conduct them immediately by himself, lest their stubbornness should provoke him to destroy them, it is said that "the people murmured at these evil tidings." Why, what evil tidings were here? They knew, if God could not bear with their provocations, much less could angels; therefore, if a created angel be their guide, they must all perish. Hence it is that as soon as God had proclaimed His name, gracious and long-suffering, Moses falls a praying, "Let my Lord, I pray Thee, go amongst us; for it is a stiff-necked people." What an argument was this? Because none but God had the patience to bear with them. As if he had said, Though thou shouldest send the most tender-hearted angel in heaven to conduct them, they would be a lost people. 3. Compare it with the patience of the glorified saints. Though their patience be perfect in its kind, yet it is not like God's. The souls under the altar are a clear instance of this: they "cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" It is true, here was no sinful impatience; yet a patience infinitely short of the patience of God. The glorified saints are not so able to bear the slow pace of justice against the enemies of the Church as Christ is. If the government of the world had been committed to them, it had been at an end long ere now.—*Wisheart.*

IV. St. Peter's Testimony to the Patience of God.

1 Its peculiar fitness.

[11185] St. Peter dwells on this grace of patience with peculiar earnestness, returning to it as if it had a special power to his conscience and a special sacredness to his heart. Have we not a reason for this, and at the same time a deeper look into his warm heart, when we turn to his personal character and history? His was just one of those impressible, impetuous temperaments — with great faults and great virtues, which lay a heavy tax upon the patience of friends, and yet inspire, beneath all that, a lively interest. So he must have felt how repeatedly and bitterly he had tried that one Divine Friend who had called him to be a disciple, and forgiven him again and again. Ardent, rash, vacillating—starting in faith to walk on the waters, yet suddenly afraid and beginning to sink—ready to break his Master's law of love by smiting with the sword—interrupting with his refusal the calm and holy action when the Lord washed His followers' feet—denying thrice the Saviour that he loved after all, and was afterwards ready to die for—it is not strange that, as he looked back on his blotted record when he was growing old, and wrote his epistles,

he should enlarge with tender and grateful unction on this heavenly patience. No wonder he testified that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation, and rejoiced with Him a thousand years are as one day, and unfolded that lofty ideal of Christian long-suffering where not only he that is buffeted for his faults but he that suffers for doing well takes it patiently--and strengthens his brethren with the promise that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.—*F. D. Huntington.*

V. Homiletical Hints.

1 This conception of God should quicken every moral sensibility and make a life of sin painful and distasteful to us.

[11186] It is one thing to sin against a government, and another thing to sin against a being. God is the tenderest, the most patient, the gentlest, and the dearest friend that we have ; that He knows everything, within and without ; and that though we are sinful and wicked, He, in His infinite compassion and mercy, forgives us, and says, "Do not sin against Me, nor against Mine." It is this conception of sinning against God as a Person that has always been the most powerful with me, and that I have found to be the most powerful with men. This is one of the reasons why I have attempted among you to get rid of the idea of a God that sits behind laws, and to cultivate the idea of a personal God, whose law is His thoughts and feelings. I therefore say that when you consider that right-doing pleases God, and that wrong-doing displeases Him, it quickens the conscience through the feeling of love, and should make one more sensitive to disobedience than merely the thought of transgressing God's law, as if it were something apart from Himself. Can there be raised up before the mind a conception more stimulating, or one that shall more effectually win and wean a man from wrong, and lift him toward that which is right, than that view of God which represents Him as so ineffably gentle, so wonderfully patient, so sweet-minded, and so intent upon men's good, as the means of their glory?

2 There is, in this presentation of God's character, an argument against a dishonourable reliance on His goodness as a means of sinning.

[11187] "Shall we continue in sin," says the apostle, "that grace may abound?" He has been opening this view of grace in Christ Jesus, and showing that He forgives transgression and sin ; and now he assumes the language of the objector, and says, "Why, if God forgives sin, when a man has stopped sinning and repented, cannot he go on and sin again, and then repent again, and be forgiven?"

Well, that is not the only place where this has been the experience of men. Where men are bent upon wrong there is always a strong tendency to select a character of God that is not very just but that is very kind—so kind that behind it they may gain some security in their wrong course. And when God's long-suffering and patience are opened up to men they often say, "Well, if God is a being that is tender and loving, I need not be in a hurry to leave off my evil ways, He will bear with me a little longer, and I do not believe that He will account with me for my petty trangressions." Men deliberately employ God's mercy and goodness to violate His feelings. Now, I can imagine that a man might fleece me and swindle me in a hundred shrewd ways, and that I might get along with it. There is only one thing that I think would be about a match for my generosity. Suppose I should find a man seemingly sick and suffering from hunger, and at great inconvenience I should take him up, and bring him into my house, and give him the best that I had, and nurse him day after day, making him as a child under my roof, and serving his comfort in every possible way ; and suppose, after about a week, he should get up in the night, availing himself of the interior confidence of my family, and rob me, and walk out of my dwelling—I think it would be hard for me to get along with that. I do not know of anything that is more wicked than for a man to draw out a person's beneficence toward him, and then avail himself of that person's generosity to injure him. That is infernal ; it is inhuman ; because kindness seems to lay almost every man under a debt of gratitude. A dog even feels itself laid under a debt of gratitude by kindness. It is only men who are corrupted that would ever think of making goodness and generosity and kindness towards them the ground on which to base a violation of these qualities. Shall you argue with yourself that because God is so good you will go on, and insult Him and wound Him and injure Him? or shall this same goodness lead you to repentance and newness of life? . . . For the sake of honour and manhood do not tread upon God's goodness and generosity and magnanimity by offending Him more!—*Beecher.*

[11888] The particular that is applied here to the Almighty represents Him as we are not very apt to think of Him, *i.e.*, as having before Him all the evil, of every kind, in His children, and bearing it ; our ingratitude, our disobedience, our folly, our fickleness, our obstinacy, our selfishness, our wilfulness, our sensuality, our irreverence, our vanity — the whole dark and diversified mass of our sin. The catalogue of its shapes and degrees is well-nigh inexhaustible, yet it does not exhaust His patience.

SECTION XIV.

SINS.

SECTION XIV.

SINS.

PAGE

A.—INTRODUCTION—RESPECTING SIN GENERALLY ... 112

B.—LIST OF VARIOUS SINS 136

DIVISION A.

INTRODUCTION.

(*See* Sectional Index, pp. 522, 523, and General Index at the end of last volume.)

SYLLABUS.

I.—SIN GENERALLY.

		PAGE
I.	Meaning of the Term	112
II.	Its Definition	112
III.	Its Description and Real Character	112
IV.	Distinction between Crime and Sin	113
V.	The Nature of Sin	113
VI.	Human Depravity	113
VII.	The (Universal) Consciousness of the Existence of Sin	115
VIII.	Its Characteristics	116
IX.	Its Various Classes and Aspects	120
	1 Believers, Sins of	120
	2 Besetting Sins	120
	3 Little Sins (so-called)	122
	4 Mortal and Venial Sins	124
	5 Omission and Commission, Sins of	124
	6 Past, Sins of the	125
	7 Presumptuous Sins	126
	8 Respectable Sins (so-called)	126
	9 Secret Sins	127
	10 Unpardonable Sin, the	127
X.	Excuses for Sinning	128
XI.	The Christian's Attitude in Regard to Sinners	129
XII.	Common-Sense Reasons against Sinning	129
XIII.	Punishment of Sin	130
XIV.	Delusion of Sin [to believe a Lie]	131
XV.	Practical Counsels	131

SECTION XIV.

SINS.

DIVISION A.

INTRODUCTION—RESPECTING SIN GENERALLY.

1

INTRODUCTION.

I. Sin (Generally): Meaning of the Term.

[11189] "Sin," and the converse term "holiness," are religious terms, the correlative expressions "vice" and "virtue" referring to moral philosophy, and "crime" to state offence. "Sin" includes the meaning of several Hebrew and Greek terms, such as רשע, *ἁμαρτία*, forensic failure; שגגה, *παράβασις*, transgression of the boundary line of right and wrong; פשע, *ἀνομία*, lawlessness; רע, *κακία*, evil; and מרד (stronger than all), *ἀποστασία*, revolt.

II. Its Definition.

1 **Sin is the self-determined following of man's perverse will, in opposition to the holy and pure will of God.**

[11190] Sin is wilful disobedience of God's commandments proceeding from distrust, and leading to confusion and trouble.—*R. B. Girdlestone.*

[11191] It results in a direct way from the original depravation of our nature, and springs out of the imperious demands of self; it is a blind striving for present gratification in ways condemned by God.

[11192] It is the evidence of Satanic rebellion stirring the heart and driving it on to vicious thoughts and deeds by suggestion of evil.

[11193] It is a centring of the corrupt heart upon self itself, taking the form either of towering pride, or unscrupulous ambition, or lust of pre-eminence, regardless of the means used for attaining its object; or showing itself in lower phases of self-seeking—sins of luxury and effeminacy, the natural instincts of malice and cruelty, the greed of gain, and abject thraldom to the world, all of which stand in eternal contrast with holiness and goodness of the moral Governor of the world.—*Blunt's Dictionary.*

[11194] Sin is not a new faculty or a new element introduced, but it is the confusion of the existing elements through man being thrown out of his true centre.

III. Its Description and Real Character.

[11195] Look now at sin. Pluck off that painted mask and turn upon her face the lamp of God's Word. We start—it reveals a death's head. I stay not to quote texts descriptive of sin. It is a debt, a burden, a thief, a sickness, a leprosy, a plague, a poison, a serpent, a sting; everything that man hates it is; a load of curses and calamities, beneath whose crushing, most intolerable pressure the whole creation groaneth. Name me the evil that springs not from this root, the crime that I may not lay at its door. Who is the hoary sexton that digs man a grave? Who is the painted temptress that steals his virtue? Who is the murderess that destroys his life? Who is the sorceress that first deceives, and then damns his soul?—Sin. Who with icy breath blights the fair blossoms of youth? Who breaks the hearts of parents? Who brings old men's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave?—Sin. Who, by a more hideous metamorphosis than Ovid even fancied, changes gentle children into vipers, tender mothers into monsters, and their fathers into worse than Herods, the murderers of their own innocents?—Sin. Who casts the apple of discord on household hearts? Who lights the torch of war, and bears it blazing over trembling lands? Who, by divisions in the church, rends Christ's seamless robe?—Sin. Who is this Delilah that sings the Nazarite asleep, and delivers up the strength of God into the hands of the uncircumcised? Who, winning smiles on her face, honeyed flattery on her tongue, stands in the door to offer the sacred rites of hospitality, and, when suspicion sleeps, treacherously pierces our temples with a nail? What fair siren is this, who, seated on a rock by the deadly pool, smiles to deceive, sings to lure, kisses to betray, and flings her arms around our

neck to leap with us into perdition?—Sin. Who turns the soft and gentlest heart to stone? Who hurls reason from her lofty throne, and impels sinners, mad as Gadarene swine, down the precipice into a lake of fire?—Sin.—*Dr. Guthrie.*

[11196] Were the visage of sin seen at a full light, undressed and unpainted, it were impossible, while it so appeared, that any one soul could be in love with it, but would rather flee from it as hideous and abominable.—*Abp. Leighton.*

IV. Distinction between Crime and Sin.

[11197] Crime is one thing and sin is another. There may be sin where there is not what is generally known as crime. But there cannot be crime as between man and man without a great offence having been committed as between man and God. Crimes are social; crime lies between man and man, between man and society, between man and human law. The magistrate takes note of crime. Crime can be measured, weighed; can be pronounced upon and have adequate punishment meted out to it. But sin—who knows the nature thereof? and who has a line fine enough to measure it, or an eye penetrating enough to see it as it really is? None, but God only. I can forgive a crime. But I have no jurisdiction in the province of sin.—*J. Parker.*

V. Nature of Sin.

1 Sin is no mere negative quality, but a positive evil.

[11198] It consists in a graduated absence of good. True as it may be in philosophy that the imperfection of the creature must involve the idea of evil, this gets no nearer to a final solution of the difficulty. "Against this immovable barrier of the existence of evil the waves of philosophy have dashed themselves unceasingly since the birth of human thought, and have retired broken and powerless, without displaying the minutest fragment of the stubborn rock, without softening one feature of its dark and rugged surface" (Mansel, "Lines of Religious Thought," Lect. vii.) No definition of sin can be satisfactory that fails to set forth its positive evil. Kant defined sin to be a spontaneous declension from the moral law, an abnormal action of the springs of reason. Schleiermacher made it a traversing of the Divine consciousness within the soul by the individual consciousness, creative of remorse; but this resolves the nature of sin into a contingent antagonism, and fails to mark "the exceeding sinfulness of sin" (Rom. vii. 13); that it is in itself essential evil in its most positive aspect; that it is the flesh lusting agalnst the spirit; and breaking out into irregular desires and inordinate impulse, deceit, and sensuality, as the *alter ego* of self, the efflux of the carnal heart which is "not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," so long as it continues unchanged; for until that exterminating change comes, sin, as positive evil, is the soul's death, and a total alienation from the life of God.—*Blunt's Dictionary.*

2 Human sin is not rebellion out of original self-will and self-consciousness.

[11199] There are many passages in Scripture which tell us that sin in man was originally the consequence of evil suggestions from without, and that the evil one who first insinuated suspicions of God's goodness has continued to hold sway over man's heart from that time to this, has kept man in blindness and bondage, and has sought, and is seeking, to neutralize the great remedy against sin which God has provided.

[11200] Man is misled, deceived, ruined, dominated over by Satan, who conceals himself under the guise of the pleasure of sense and independence, and who was a liar and murderer from the beginning.—*R. B. Girdlestone.*

[11201] But for the fact of Satan's power, would not human sinfulness itself be devilish, that is, a rebellion against God out of original self-will and self-consciousness, and so one from which there could be no deliverance? while, on the contrary, we have the comfort of knowing that we, who were deceived at the first, who continue to be deceived again and again by lies and semblances, are yet capable of being restored to liberty by that truth which makes free. —*Stahelin.*

3 It (i.e., original sin) is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man.

[11202] Weeds come of themselves; flowers require cultivation. There is depravity in the soil, a tendency to thorns and thistles. It is under the curse. Good things are brought out of the soil, like good things out of the human heart, only as the result of much labour. It takes no pains to produce a harvest of weeds, nor to produce the harvest that the thief or the drunkard reaps—no more effort than is required to float down stream. This is depravity.—*Gleanings for Sermons.*

4 It is a mysterious parenthesis in human history.

[11203] A mystery, yet that one which makes everything else concerning human redemption plain. Sin is not to be regarded as a part of the essence of human nature. Sin was not in man as originally created, nor will it be in man as finally glorified.—*Bowes.*

VI. Human Depravity.

1 Its definition.

[11204] The Bible does not say that men are only a mass of corruption, and utterly depraved, but it accuses them chiefly of want of right feelings towards God. Hear its declarations: "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it

is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "The Lord looked down from heaven, to see if there were any that did understand and seek after God, but they are all gone astray." We are accused of "departing from the living God;" of saying that "we will not have Him to reign over us;" of wishing Him "to depart, because we desire not the knowledge of His ways;" of "not liking to retain God in our thoughts," and of "loving the creature more than the Creator." Look throughout the Bible, and everywhere you will find that this is the head and front of our offending—the great depravity of which we are accused. It is true that our want of love to God affects us in all our social relations. We do not discharge the duties of these so perfectly, and our morality is not so pure, as if God had the right place in our hearts. This one defect lessens and impairs even that natural virtue which we concede to man. Those beautiful instances which we have seen in unrenewed nature would have been more beautiful had the true principle of doing all to God's glory been seen in them. But the great defect is, that God has not the true place in our hearts.—*H. H. Lewin.*

[11205] By the phrase, "human depravity," we mean that corruption of our nature whereby we are inclined to sin rather than to holiness, to rebellion against God rather than to obedience, to enmity rather than love. The seat of this depravity is within; external forms of wickedness, in words and actions, are only the results and expressions of it; the hidden principle from which they spring is in the heart, "for out of the heart," the Redeemer assures us, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. xv. 19), and everything else, in the disgusting catalogue of crimes by which society is disordered and the character of man defiled.

[11206] Most men who admit that they have no religion resist the conclusion that they are therefore entirely depraved. But to decide the point, we have only to ascertain in what purity of heart or holiness consists, and whether a man who has no religion possesses it. Purity of heart or holiness consists in conformity of heart to the law of God, and includes, of course, supreme love to God. He, therefore, who has not supreme love to God possesses no such affections of heart towards God as the law requires; and, so far as his heart is concerned, his depravity is entire. And as to actions, however correct in form they may be, they cannot, without holiness of heart, be regarded as obedience. The entireness of human depravity, therefore, consists in the constant voluntary refusal of man to love the Lord his God with supreme complacency and good-will.—*Beecher* (*condensed*).

a Its existence.

[11207] Nowadays we hardly know what nature is; we only see it humanized by centuries of culture; and we take its acquired calm for an innate moderation. The foundation of the natural man are irresistible impulses, passions, desires, greeds—all blind; and these are latent in all men.—*Taine.*

[11208] That which Æsop said to his master when he came into his garden and saw so many weeds in it is applicable to the human heart. His master asked him what was the reason that the weeds grew up so fast and the herbs thrived not? He answered, "The ground is natural mother to the weeds, but a stepmother to the herbs."—*Goodwin.*

[11209] When we are gazing on a sweet, guileless child, playing in the exuberance of its happiness, we are tempted to deny that anything so lovely can have a corrupt nature latent within; and we would gladly disbelieve that the germs of evil are lying in these beautiful blossoms. Yet, in the tender green of the sprouting nightshade, we can already recognize the deadly poison that is to fill its ripened berries. Were our discernment of our own nature as clear as that of plants, we should probably perceive the embryo evil in it no less distinctly.—*Guesses at Truth.*

[11210] Human depravity maintains secret, constant intercourse with man's mortal enemy; it is a treacherous inmate, ready upon all occasions to betray the soul to him who seeks to devour it. This encourages him to invade, make inroads into the soul; knowing he has a strong party within that will not fail him. His fiery darts would not be so dangerous, but that there is this matter to kindle on. He would in time be weary of assaulting, but that this innate domestic enemy is so ready to open to him (John xiv. 30). There was no natural corruption in Christ for Satan to work upon, no such inbred traitor to open, no secret friend of his to give entertainment; and therefore, after three or four attempts, he quite leaves Christ, desists from his enterprise, despairing of success; but he will never want encouragement to assault us so long as natural corruption continues in us.—*D. Clarkson*, 1622–1686.

[11211] There are crimes, God only knows how many and how great, which seem to us the result of some monstrous depravity, and which can be traced outwardly to some overpowering and unfortunate conjunction of circumstances, yet which as surely have their origin in an evil thought indulged in childhood or in youth, as the mighty river which pours its volume of water into the ocean has its birth from the few drops issuing forth from the spring among the mountains.—*Passing Thoughts on Religion.*

[11212] What we *will* that we morally *do.* This doctrine suggests that the world is really worse than it appears. It appears bad enough, its outward features and procedures are most repulsive to the eye of reflective virtue; but not a tithe of the heart's dispositions does the body

represent. The soul has a world of sentiment that neither tongue nor pen expresses; it is conscious of hosts of volitions that the muscles and limbs never carry into effect. We thank God that the body is too frail fully to work out the latent wishes of a depraved world. Where circumstances have been pre-eminently favourable for the play of the soul's propensities, we have had terrible exhibitions: we have had Herods, Judases, Neros, and Napoleons, to tell us what depths of iniquity there are in the human heart.—*Homilist.*

3 Its extent.

(1) *Total in its influence over the human mind.*

a. As to the understanding.

[11213] The understanding is that power or faculty by which we abstract, compound, arrange, and judge concerning things or ideas when presented to the mind, and by which, if it were in a perfect state, we ought to be conducted, in every instance, to the possession of the truth. And what is the testimony of Scripture concerning this faculty? The apostle tells us that the Gentiles walked in the "vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, and being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph. iv. 17, 18).

b. As to the conscience.

[11214] Conscience may be defined as that testimony which the mind bears to the moral qualities of its own volitions and actions; or the impressions which a man has, in his own breast, of the right or wrong of his conduct in every case. And what are the prevailing characteristics of this act of the mind? Is it always correct, and in harmony with the Scripture, and consistent with the true nature of those things concerning which it expresses its decision? No; for we read of an evil conscience, a weak conscience, a defiled conscience, and a seared conscience; while the conscience that is good is made so by being purged, which implies a previous state of pollution, "purged by the blood of Christ from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. ix. 14).

c. As to the will.

[11215] The influence of this depravity prevails to a most awful extent over this important faculty of the human mind. The will is that power of the soul whereby it chooses or rejects the objects which are presented to it. In nothing is the depravity and rebellion of the human will more apparent than in its virtual and practical rejection of the will of God, both in the equity of His law and the grace of His gospel; and that, too, under circumstances of the most aggravated and atrocious kind (Rom. i. 21). Can, then, a will thus opposed to the will of God, thus set alike against the commands of His justice and His mercy, the rectitude of His law, and the grace of His gospel, be the will of a perfect being? Where is its obedience? where is its submission? where is its acquiescence in the will of God? In proportion as it is deficient in all these respects, it is depraved—deep and dreadful, then, is its depravity.

d. As to the affections.

[11216] The affections are the more strong and vigorous actings of the human will, by which attachments and dislikes are formed, more permanent in their duration, and less impetuous in their degree, than those emotions of the mind which we call passions. Survey the great mass of population in any nominal Christian land, to say nothing of the heathen, who are more than half the inhabitants of the globe, and answer, is their conversation in heaven? is their treasure in heaven?

[11217] I have seen men who, I thought, ought to have a whole conversion for each one of their faculties. Their natures were so unmitigatedly wicked that it cost more for them to be decent than it would for other men to be saints.—*Beecher.*

4 Admonitions.

[11218] We know not so well how we came to be depraved as that we are. Therefore, as in the case of a town on fire, let us not busily inquire how it came, but carefully endeavour to put it out. A traveller passing by and seeing a man fallen into a deep pit, began to wonder how he fell in: to whom the other replied, "Do thou, good friend, rather study how to help me out than stand questioning how I came in."—*S. Adams.*

[11219] It grieves one to the heart to see them using the bellows who ought to be extinguishing the flame.

VII. The (Universal) Consciousness of the Existence of Sin.

[11220] As light is universal, although some may shut their eyes close, and admit none of it, so is the consciousness of sin universal, although many believe that they have got rid of it altogether. For this very absence of conviction only proves the incompleteness of their nature. They deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them. They have lost the feeling of sin that was given them as a safeguard. It burns them like a fire; but their skin has lost all sensation. They are sleeping steeped in cold mists and poisonous dews, but they know not the poison because they are asleep. Yet fire burns, and poison destroys not the less when the senses, that are sentinels against them, desert their posts. Every man whose nature is complete, and awake, and active, knows that there is such a thing as sin, that he is a partaker of it. The man who has tried for a quarter of a century to pare off from his mind all that does not minister to one chosen worldly pursuit, will be able to deny that he is convinced of sin. But you appeal from such maimed and crippled spirits to the general sense of more

complete minds; and the result is the admission that there is a better law, which our conscience admits the authority of, warning against the law of pride, and self-will, and appetite within us, and that the worse prevails against the better, and that the sense of disquiet accompanies that wrong decision in every case. —*Abp. Thomson.*

VIII. Its Characteristics.

1 Vitality and solidarity.

[11221] One sin keeps up the devil's interest; it is like a nest egg left there to draw a new temptation.—*Manton*, 1620–1667.

[11222] A man that breaks one point of God's law, breaks it all. "If thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill thou art become a transgressor" —of the single commandment? No, thou art a transgressor "of the whole law"! Like some of those creeping weeds that lie underground and put up a little leaf here and another one there; and you dig down fancying that their roots are short, but you find that they go creeping and tortuous below the surface, and the whole soil is full of them—so all sin holds on by one root.—*Maclaren.*

[11223] As an eagle, though she enjoy her wings and beak, is wholly prisoner if she be held but by one talon; so are we, though we could be delivered of all habit of sin, in bondage still, if vanity hold us but by a silken thread.—*Donne*, 1573–1631.

2 Deceitfulness.

(1) *Charge sin at any one point, or at any one time, and it immediately assumes the name of some virtue to which it bears a partial resemblance.*

[11224] Is a man forgetting God, and the duties which he owes to Him, that he may, through deep anxiety, and a contempt of present comforts, amass wealth, and purchase earthly possessions?—he calls his conduct by the name of industry. Is he selfishly and systematically employed in raising himself step by step in society, to the disregard of all higher claims?—he professes to be swayed by an innocent regard to the respect of his fellowmen. Is he in the way of despising the poor, of fostering a spirit of revenge, and avoiding the confession of sin?—his conduct passes for spirit and magnanimity. Is he addicted to rudeness, to quarrelsomeness, and profanity?—he claims the merit due to independence of thinking and acting. Is he led to give a servile obeisance to the prevailing opinion, or conceal his sentiments in the presence of persons of rank and name?—he shelters his conduct under the guise of modesty and civility of manners. It is in this way that we account for the perverted moral judgments of mankind.—*McCosh.*

[11225] Satan can colour over sin with the name and pretence of virtue. Alcibiades hung a curtain curiously embroidered over a foul picture full of satyrs: so Satan can put the image of virtue over the foul picture of sin. Satan can cheat men with false wares, he can make them believe that presumption is faith, that intemperate passion is zeal, revenge is prudence, covetousness is frugality, and prodigality good hospitality. "Come see my zeal for the Lord," saith Jehu. Satan persuaded him it was a fire from heaven, when it was nothing but the wild-fire of his own ambition; 'twas not zeal, but state policy. This is a subtle art of Satan to deceive by tempting, and put men oft with the dead child instead of the live child, to make men believe that is a grace which is a sin; as if one should write balm-water upon a glass of poison.—*Watson*, 1692.

(2) *Sin always has two aspects—distinct and contrasting—one before, and the other after her end is gained.*

[11226] How musical in the ear of Judas was the jingle of the thirty pieces of silver, while the bribe was dangling in the purse of the treasurer of the chief priests and elders! Yet how dull and tinsel was its ring as he dashed them down upon the table in his agony, after their lustre had been tarnished by the tinge of harmless blood! How fair was the enchantress when she came to him with her promises; yet how hard and haggard was her mocking features when the mask had fallen and the real face was seen! And is it not always so? Have you not found it so every time you have dallied with the charmer, and listened to her voice? There's many a deadly poison which is pleasant to the taste; there's many a fatal lullaby which is charming to the ear; there's many a Dead Sea apple which is tempting to the eye; there's many a cruel hand which is soft as velvet.

Sin is a siren while she tempts, but an ugly raw-boned hag when she has her prey within her toils. Those tresses which appear so comely may change to snakes to sting the hand which smoothes them; those dove-like winsome eyes that swim so wantonly, shall flash like basilisks upon you if you are captivated by their blandishments; the bloom upon those lips is painted to decoy the heady trifler, and the kiss of lust imprinted there shall wash away the lying bloom, and show the livid, corpse-like grin of the death's-head.

There is said to have been kept in the halls of the Inquisition a beauteous statue or effigy of a virgin; the painter's tenderest strokes of art had been expended to give loveliness to the face, and the sculptor's utmost skill had been enlisted to add charm to charm in the rounded moulding of form and limb. The white arms were undraped and extended wide, as though to embrace; the eye and lip, and the whole attitude were full of winning invitation: and the professing penitent was led into this fair presence, and commanded to advance and embrace the figure. As soon as he drew near to meet that bending neck and stooping smile, the fair white arms encircled him—not with the caress

of love, but with the vice-like clutch of vengeance, and the bosom opened, and the lips expanded, and a hundred gleaming knives shot from the virgin figure, transfixing the victim with a hundred scarlet stabs; the parted lips pushed forth a barbed tongue, and showed fanged teeth to lacerate and tear: in short, the beauty was transformed into a beast, the fairy form became an armoury of poignards, whose every charm concealed a dagger, and whose every grace was death. And so it is with sin. Decking her bed with roses, she merges her poison-breath amidst their fragrance, and lulls her silly victim with a counterfeit repose. Oh, rest not on her pillow, for a serpent coils beneath it! Wander not amidst her bowers, for wasps are honeying amidst her blossoms and leaving their stings in the core of all her fruits. Recline not upon the sunny knolls, for volcanic lava lurks under the moss, and the fire of hell lights up her transient heaven. "My son, when sinners entice thee, consent thou not."—*Mursell.*

[11227] There is more bitterness following upon sin's ending than ever there was sweetness flowing from sin's acting. You that see nothing but *well* in its commission will suffer nothing but *woe* in its conclusion. You that sin for your profits will never profit by your sins.—*Dyer.*

[11228] The tale of the goblet which the genius of a heathen fashioned was true, and taught a moral of which many a death-bed furnishes the melancholy illustration. Having made the model of a serpent, he fixed it in the bottom of the cup. Coiled for the spring, a pair of gleaming eyes in its head, and in its open mouth fangs raised to strike, it lay beneath the ruby wine. Nor did he who raised the golden cup to quench his thirst, and quaff the delicious draught, suspect what lay below, till, as he reached the dregs, that dreadful head rose up, and glistened before his eyes. So, when life's cup is nearly emptied, and sin's last pleasure quaffed, and unwilling lips are draining the bitter dregs, shall rise the ghastly terrors of remorse and death and judgment upon the despairing soul. Be assured, a serpent lurks at the bottom of guilt's sweetest pleasure.—*Dr. Guthrie.*

[11229] The approaches of sin are like the conduct of Jael. It "brings butter in a lordly dish." It bids high for the soul. But when it has fascinated and lulled the victim, the nail and the hammer are behind.—*Cecil*, 1748–1810.

[11230] There are many false lights in the world, only one true one. It is our nature to be drawn forth and dazzled by those false lights, by worldly ambition, carnal pleasures, uncertain riches. Like moths, men hover round these dazzling objects, and sometimes touch them, but then they become their destruction.—*Salter.*

[11231] It is the goodly outside that sin puts on which tempteth to destruction; it has been said that sin, like the bee, has honey in its mouth, but a sting in its tail.—*H. Ballou.*

(3) *Sin has the power to stupefy and to bewitch its victims.*

[11232] The wages that sin bargains with the sinner are life, pleasure, and profit; but the wages it pays him with are death, torment, and destruction: he that would understand the falsehood and deceit of sin thoroughly must compare its promises and its payments together.—*South*, 1633–1716.

[11233] It hath many secret ways of insinuating; it is like a Delilah; it is like Jael or Sisera. Sin is a sweet poison, it tickleth while it stabbeth. The first thing that sin doth is to bewitch, then to put out the eyes, then take away the sense and feeling; and do to a man as Lot's daughters did to him—make him drunk, and then he doth he knoweth not what. As Joab came with a kind salute to Abner, and thrust him under the fifth rib while Abner thought of nothing but kindness, so sin comes smiling, comes pleasing and humouring thee, while it giveth thee a deadly stab.—*Anthony Burgess.*

[11234] Let us labour to see Jael's nail as well as her milk, Delilah's scissors as well as her bosom, the snake's poison as well as her embrace, and the bee's sting as well as her honey.—*Dyke.*

[11235] None go to hell but those that choose the way to hell, and would not be persuaded out of it; none miss heaven but those that did set so light by it, as to prefer the world and sin before it, and refused the holy way that leadeth to it. And surely man that naturally loveth himself would never take so mad a course, if his reason were not laid asleep, and his understanding were not wofully deluded: and this is the business of the tempter, who doth not drag men to sin by violence, but draw and entice them by temptations.—*Baxter*, 1615–1691.

[11236] Sin, by its deadly infusions into the soul of man, wastes and eats out the innate vigour of the soul, and casts it into such a deep lethargy, as that it is not able to recover itself.—*J. Smith.*

[11237] We have heard of a singular tree, that forcibly illustrates the deceitfulness of sin. It is called the Judas tree. The blossoms appear before the leaves, and they are of brilliant crimson. The flaming beauty of the flowers attracts innumerable insects; and the wandering bee is drawn to it to gather honey. But every bee that alights upon the blossoms imbibes a fatal opiate, and drops dead from among the crimson flowers to the earth. Beneath this enticing tree the earth is strewed with the victims of its fatal fascinations. That fatal plant that attracts only to destroy is a vivid emblem of the

deceitfulness and deadliness of sin. For the poison of sin's bewitching flowers there is but one remedy: it is found in the "leaves of the tree of life" that groweth on Mount Calvary.—*Cuyler.*

[11238] Nothing else is so deceitful as a perverted will. It is more cunning than the most expert thief, craftier than the deepest politician, more artful than the wiliest hypocrite, more plausible than the most skilful flatterer. If we must sometimes be on our guard against the treachery of our fellow-men, it behoves us to exercise a still more watchful jealousy over ourselves. Every wise man is sensitive as to the first approaches of that flattery which interested parties give him, but we have all greater cause to dread the flattery which the deceitful heart is sending up as incense. Other parties, in their attempts to deceive us, can have access to us only at certain times, and in particular ways; but the heart presents its delusive suggestions at all times, and by an infinite variety of channels. Much as there is among us of deception, of the deception of one man by his neighbour, there is much more of self-deception. Of all flattery, self-flattery is the most common. —*McCosh.*

3 Contagiousness, and rapid-spreading destructiveness.

[11239] Sin is of a contagious and spreading nature, and the human heart is but too susceptible of the infection.—*J. Witherspoon.*

[11240] Sins are like circles in the water when a stone is thrown into it, one produces another. —*M. Henry.*

[11241] Sin is never at a stay; if we do not retract from it, we shall advance in it; and the farther on we go, the more we have to come back again.—*J. Barrow.*

[11242] Once upon the inclined road of error, and there is no swiftness so tremendous as that with which we dash adown the plane, no insensibility so obstinate as that which fastens on us through the quick descent. The start once made, and there is neither stopping nor waking until the last and lowest depth is sounded. Our natural fears and promptings become hushed with the first impetus, and we are lost to everything but the delusive tones of sin, which only cheat the senses and make our misery harmonious. Farewell all opportunities of escape —the strivings of conscience — the faithful whisperings of shame, which served us even when we stood trembling at the fatal point! Farewell the holy power of virtue, which made foul things look hideous, and good things lovely, and kept a guard about our hearts to welcome beauty and frighten off deformity! Farewell integrity, joy, rest, and happiness.—*Melvill.*

[11243] As sins proceed they ever multiply, and like figures in arithmetic, the last stands for more than all that went before it.—*Sir T. Browne.*

[11244] Sin first is pleasing, then frequent, then habitual, then confirmed; then the man is impenitent, then he is obstinate, then he is resolved never to repent, then he is ruined.—*R. Leighton.*

[11245] The gradual and unnoticed growth of evil in our hearts is another element of self-deception. Nobody is at his worst all at once. Sin comes in like the breaking of a dam; first only a little softness, then a trickle, next an ever-widening rush till all gives way, and the flood comes amain."—*Beecher.*

[11246] In every sin there is a dark and almost infinite vista. It is like an opening into a mysterious cavern. Imagination dreads dangers and evils, serpents hidden in the cave, pestilential, poisonous atmosphere, concealed dungeons or pitfalls. It is like the entrance into a dense wood; we hesitate whether we should venture, we dread the attack of fierce beasts or cruel men, and yet men are so little afraid of entering into sin, though they know not what it leads to, fancying they can retrace their steps at any moment.

[11247] There are manifest reasons for holding this opinion, that as in good things the human will is of itself weak to accomplish any good (for it is by Divine help that it is brought to perfection in everything), so also in things of an opposite nature we receive certain initial elements, and, as it were, seeds of sins, from those things which we use agreeably to nature; but when we have indulged them beyond what is proper, and have not resisted the first movements to intemperance, then the hostile power, seizing the occasion of this first transgression, incites and presses us hard in every way, seeking to extend our sins over a wider field, and furnishing us human beings with occasions and beginnings of sins, which these hostile powers spread far and wide, and, if possible, beyond all limits. Thus, when men at first for a little desire money, covetousness begins to grow as the passion increases, and finally the fall into avarice takes place. And after this, when blindness of mind has succeeded passion, and the hostile powers, by their suggestions, hurry on the mind, money is now no longer desired, but stolen, and acquired by force, or even by shedding human blood.—*Origen.*

[11248] Every hour the rootlets of the climber are sucking the life out of the unhappy tree. Yet there was a day when the ivy was a tiny aspirant, only asking a little aid in climbing. Had it been denied then, the tree had never become its victim, but by degrees the humble weakling grew in strength and arrogance, and at last it assumed the mastery, and the tall tree became the prey of the creeping, insinuating destroyer.—*Spurgeon.*

[11249] "Thy servant a dog?" asked Hazael, indignantly, when Elisha described to him his growth in evil, and pourtrayed to him his future self, setting the strongholds of Israel on fire, slaying their young men with the sword, dashing their childen to the earth, and ripping up their women with child. At the moment his horror was quite sincere, and yet he was guilty of them all.—*A. B. Bruce.*

[11250] The most sorry drunken wreck of a man was once sober enough, but he first kept company with drinking men, then tasted, then came to like, and you see the end. The dishonest clerk was once honest as any one till he first coveted, then took a trifle, intending to refund it, then grew bold by impunity, till the crash came, and he found himself a felon.

[11251] I have sometimes wished that it were possible to make the working of moral and spiritual poison visible as we can physical. How the deadly damage of a look, of a light word, of a throb of passion, of a pulse of temptation, would strike! . . . "Small sins" can't be in the soul without doing damage. Be it ours to feel and fear that; looking up longingly as "the dry leaves rustle for the rain."—*Grosart.*

[11252] We have the heavenly assurance that the path of the just is to shine more and more unto the perfect day. But this blessed truth involves its opposite, that the path of the wicked must grow darker and darker unto the total night, unless he give heed to the voice which calls him out of his darkness, and turn to the light, which is ever striving to illumine it.—*Hare.*

[11253] Every moral evil bears in its bosom further evils, which are its necessary offspring, without which it could not itself be. Each moral evil may at any time demand, as its price, further evil. Sins of the flesh necessarily, besides themselves, involve intense selfishness, injustice, hard-heartedness, deceit; they often issue in what is murder. So as to faith. Faith being one consistent whole, every departure from faith involves inconsistency. The system of truth before rolled around its centre, God. The withdrawal of one truth disturbs the relations of the whole. The introduction of one error involves the re-adjustment of the whole. The human mind will, in the end, be consistent. Partial error must find its consistency in the end, upwards or downwards. On the Rock of truth, or in the abyss! There is no lasting footing between. No heretic abides where he began. He either sees the inherent inconsistency of his own one point of heresy, or others point it out to him. If he is too proud to return, he must plunge deeper. Hence, as a heresy runs its course, it must deny truths which at first it professed to reverence. Hence every heresy seems to degenerate, in that the principles of error which it contains are evolved. But in truth it only becomes more consistent with itself. Thus, the early Arians believed that Christ our Lord was the Son of God and God, begotten before the world by the Father, and that by Him all things were created. With this, their heresy, that He was not of the same substance with the Father, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, was plainly inconsistent. And so they drifted about, making alternately our Lord all but God, or supposing two Gods, a primary and a secondary God, and so polytheists; or else avowing their belief that He was a creature, and so idolaters. Even Socinius began by ascribing worship to Him to whom his followers ascribe human error (God forgive it!) and sinful human passions.

4 Insidiousness, in enslaving nature.

[11254] What a close resemblance there is between the ivy clinging to a building and the sin that cleaves to the old nature! So deeply and insidiously do the roots become entwined between the stones and beneath the building, that ere it can be entirely eradicated, it must be taken down piece by piece.

Thus does the Christian find that though constant care and watchfulness will check its growth, yet the roots of sin remain in him in all their vigour, ever ready to start into fresh life immediately he grows careless or negligent.

Never can it be otherwise till this earthly house is taken down, and in its place is reared the house not made with hands, eternal and glorious, upon which no spot can rest and into which the smallest fibre of sin shall never creep.—*Sunday Teachers' Treasury.*

[11255] Sin weaves its twining and embracing tendrils round about the heart. In their growth they may seem weak, and on account of their littleness and tenderness not sufficiently worth our present serious attention, because we think at any spare moment we can take the pruning-knife and lop them off with ease. So sin, like the deadly ivy, in its growth escapes our notice; its branches are thin and frail and withal green and fair to look upon. But pause awhile! The budding shoot to-day is next year the stiff and stubborn branch, and there are ten thousand little tendrils clinging and growing into the bark of the noble tree, around which the ivy is stealthily springing up: its leaves are darkening, it is becoming gloomy, and rugged, and stubborn. True, at the extremities it looks tender, and verdant, and harmless; but it is making its way, creeping on and on, and up and up. Did it approach the head of the forest tree with a hard and stubborn stalk it would take no hold, the leafy monarch would spurn the rude assault from its broad and gnarled front; but it steals softly, and even gracefully, into his breasts; closes around him with a tender embrace, and then, from its roots beginning to call up its sap and latent vigour, it swells and extends, then darkens, hardens; its grip becomes irresistible; the tree's action grows less and less free; every day its waving arms gradually cease to wave; the free air and light become shut from its

stem and branches ; it is covered with a dull, thick drapery of leaves that obstructs its growth. So gradually its sap withers away ; branch after branch decays ; its noble stem betrays rottenness and infirmity, until at length the lord of the land passes by and says, "Cut it down ; why cumbereth it the ground?"—*C. M. Bellew.*

[11256] It does not signify to the captive whether the chain which fetters his body be links of iron or a chain of gold. His captivity were a fact as truly though his limbs were bound with silken cords ; only the former would be more galling to the flesh, harder to wear, and more degrading perhaps in appearance ; but the latter would mark him as truly a slave in the power of the master, whose will must be obeyed, though He rule "with a rod of iron."

Sin is the master of the mind by nature ; though in some cases it secures the soul to the service of the world by bonds as fine as gossamer. Satan forges some of his chains of hard bondage, heavy as iron, strong as brass. In other cases he binds the heart with golden fetters, and thus gratifies pride, which assumes to be superior to the poorer—though all alike are his slaves, who are led "captive by the devil at his will" (2 Tim. ii. 26).—*Bowden.*

[11257] Sin is like the little serpent *aspis*, which stings men, whereby they fall into a pleasant sleep, and in that sleep die.—*Swinnock.*

5 Troublesomeness.

[11258] There is none either more common or more troublesome guest than sin, troublesome both in the solicitation of it and in the remorse. Before the act, it wearies with a wicked importunity : after the act, it torments us with fears and the painful gnawings of an accusing conscience.—*Bp. Hall.*

[11259] The troublesomeness of the relics of sin in the saints speaks it. Sins in the saints are but wasps without their stings ; and if the wasps without their stings be so troublesome, how troublesome are the wasps that have their stings in them ; how troublesome is sin in itself! —*W. Bridge*, 1600-1670.

IX. Its Various Classes and Aspects.

1 Sins of believers.

(1) *They are necessarily conspicuous.*

[11260] The black spot shows most upon the white garment. If the sun be eclipsed a few hours, it attracts more attention than by its clear shining the whole month.

[11261] A stain in scarlet, every one's eye is upon it : for the godly to sin, it is like a spot in scarlet, it is more taken notice of, and it reflects a greater dishonour upon the ways of God. When the sun is eclipsed, every one stands and looks upon it ; so, when a child of light is eclipsed by scandalous sin, all stand and gaze at this eclipse.—*Watson*, 1696.

[11262] If the sun be eclipsed one day, it attracts more spectators than if it shone a whole year. So if you commit one sin it will cause you many sorrows and the world many triumphs. Dr. Whitaker, on reading the fifth of Matthew, broke out saying, *Aut hoc non est evangelium, aut nos non sumus evangelici.* (Either this is not the gospel, or we are not of the gospel.) The cruelty of the Spaniards to the Indians made them refuse Christian baptism, "For," said they, "he must be a wicked God who has such wicked servants." Oh that God's jewels did but sparkle more in this benighted world !—*Secker.*

(2) *They are highly prejudicial to the interests of Christianity.*

[11263] Who can doubt that the corrupt lives of Christians in the later centuries of the Middle Ages, the avarice of the Avignon popes, the selfishness shown in the great schism, the simony and nepotism of the Roman court in the fifteenth century, excited disgust and hatred towards Christianity in the hearts of the literary men of the Renaissance, which disqualified them for the reception of the Christian evidences ; or that the social disaffection in the last century in France incensed the mind against the church that supported alleged public abuses, until it blinded a Voltaire from seeing any goodness in Christianity ; or that the religious intolerance shown within the present century by the ecclesiastical power in Italy drove a Leopardi and a Bini into doubt ; or that the sense of supposed personal wrong and social isolation deepened the unbelief of Shelley and of Heinrich Heine? Whatever other motives may have operated in these respective cases, the prejudices which arose from the causes just named doubtless created an antecedent impression against religion, which impeded the lending an unbiassed ear to its evidences.—*A. S. Farrar, D.D.*

(3) *They justly lay Christians open to the sneers of infidels.*

[11264] It was a cutting repartee made by an atheistical person to one that, leading an ill life, yet professed to wonder that the other (the argument for a Deity being so plain and cogent) did not own there was a God ; the other replied, he much more wondered that he who did own Him should yet live as he did !—*J. Howe.*

2 Besetting sins.

(1) *Their nature and existence.*

[11265] As in the hive there is one master-bee, so in the heart one master-sin.—*T. Watson.*

[11266] Almost every tree has its tap-root, which goes down as straight into the earth as the trunk goes into the air ; and until that root is cut the tree will stand and grow, no matter how the side fibres and roots be injured. Besetting sins are often the tap-root of the tree of sin.—*Bowes.*

[11267] We have every one of us besetting sins. We have a mournful proclivity, a special predisposition to them, through natural temperament, or faults in our education, or the circumstances in which we are placed, or through our having given way to them in time past. There we should watch; there we should strengthen the defences of the city of the soul; against these we should specially and continually strive and pray.—*Trench (adapted).*

(2) *Their principal marks.*

[11268] 1. That for which you cannot bear to be reproved; 2. That which your heart runs out most to; 3. That which you are most easily captivated by; 4. That which troubles you most when on a sick-bed; 5. That which you are most loth to part with.—*T. Watson.*

[11269] 1. That sin which doth most of all employ our thoughts. Thoughts are the purveyors of lust. Observe on what objects they pitch. 2. That sin which most distracts us in holy duties. 3. That sin for which conscience doth especially chide us. 4. That sin which is most impatient of contradiction and reproof. The sore place shrinks from the least touch. 5. That sin which is most easily stirred by the least temptation. The ball on an inclined plane is easily moved. 6. That sin for which the sinner hath the most cloaks and fair excuses. 7. That sin which follows us most in our retirement and solitude. 8. That sin which men are ready to undergo the greatest labours and hardships to enjoy.—*Bowes.*

(3) *Their treachery.*

[11270] For many years after its course has been changed, and the art that triumphs over nature has turned its waters into a new cut, the river needs careful watching; else, swollen by winter snows or summer flood, it bursts our barriers, and, in pride of victory, foaming, roaring, raging along its old accustomed channel, sweeps dyke and bulwark to the sea. And when He that sitteth upon the flood, and turneth the hearts of men like the rivers of water, has sent the current of our tastes and feelings in a new direction, alas! how apt are they, especially when some sudden outburst of temptation comes sweeping down like a thunder-spout, to flow back into the old and deep-worn channels of a corrupt nature!—*Dr. Guthrie.*

(4) *Their objective aspect.*

a. They are Satan's strongholds.

[11271] A man's principal and most prevailing sin is Satan's strongest hold. When he is in danger to be dislodged, and driven by the power of the word out of the other parts of the soul, as it were, and from possession of a man by all other sins, he retires hither as to his castle and most impregnable fort. And therefore if this be soundly beaten upon by the hammer and horror of the law, and battered about his cares, he will be quickly enforced to quit the place quite.—*R. Bolton*, 1637.

[11272] Every man hath his iniquity; that is, such as his education and custom hath wrought upon him, which makes the sin prevail over other sins. A child of God hath a predominant sin, not over grace, for that is inconsistent with sincerity; but some master-sin which prevails over the rest; according as the channel is cut, so corrupt nature runs, but some in this channel, and some in that: every man hath his special sin, and accordingly the devil plies him.—*T. Manton.*

b. They require the utmost courage to face, and our paramount attention.

[11273] We have every one of us besetting sins. I use the plural, for they are sometimes, alas! not one, but many; sins, that is, which more easily get advantage over us than others to which we have a mournful proclivity, an especial predisposition; it may be through natural temperament, it may be through faults in our education, it may be through the circumstances in which we are placed, it may be through having given way to them in times past, and thus broken down on their side more than on any other the moral defences of our soul; the soul in this resembling paper, which, where it has been blotted once, however careful the erasure of the blot may have been, there more easily blots and runs anew than elsewhere. It is, then, a point of obvious prudence to strengthen the defences of the city of the soul there, where they are felt and known to be weakest—where that is, every one who has kept any close record of the sad secrets of his own spiritual life will in his own case abundantly know—to watch and pray against all sin, but, above all, with especial emphasis and earnestness against the sin which most easily besets us.—*Trench.*

[11274] The old proverb hath it, "Here's talk of the Turk and the Pope, but 'tis my next neighbour that does me the most harm." It is neither popery nor infidelity that we have half so much cause to dread as our own besetting sins. We want more Protestants against sin, more Dissenters from carnal maxims, more Nonconformists to the world. Our own besetting sins require far more our watchfulness than state blunders or ecclesiastical abuses."—*Spurgeon.*

c. They can only be overcome by persistent effort.

[11275] The heart of a sinner is like to troubled water, which cannot suddenly be cleared, but with leisure, and by degrees; and some time must necessarily be required to beat back those abuses whereto we have been a long time inured.—*Hayward.*

(5) *Their subjective aspect.*

a. We are all the subject of special weaknesses and temptations.

[11276] 1. Each nation has its besetting sin. Scientific observers tell us that different races of men have different kinds of weeds following

in their wake, so that a careful observer can, in travelling, see at once, by merely noticing the prevailing weeds, whether Europeans or Asiatics, negroes or Indians, have dwelt at certain places. So each nation has its peculiar sin. 2. Each age has its besetting sin. In the history of morals we find how various vices have prevailed at various times. Now an age of cruelty; now of intemperance; now of superstition; now of scepticism. Has not our own age its besetting sin? 3. Each individual has his besetting sin. John Hunter held that two general diseases cannot co-exist in the same individual. It is somewhat thus with man morally. Usually a man will be under the influence of some one particular passion or temptation. All sins are in us seminally, potentially, sympathetically, but in some one direction we are specially in danger. This may arise from our constitution. "As in the natural man, though there be all the faculties, yet some faculties are in some more lively and vigorous than in others, some are more witty, some are more strong, some quick of sight, some have a ready ear, and others a nimble tongue, &c. So it is in the old man also; there is all the power of sin in an unregenerate man, but in some more dexterous one way than another."—*Strong.*

b. We must estimate our character according to our relation to the besetting sin.

[11277] We sometimes flatteringly estimate our character by reckoning up the sins to which we have no inclination. This is a fatal miscalculation. Is it not a maxim in mechanics that a thing is no stronger than its weakest part? This is as true in morals as in mechanics. When we seek to estimate our character let us ask, How do we stand in regard to our weak points? Are we gaining or losing ground there? Never mind the strong points. If we perpetually fail in one point let us remember that that is the true index to our character, and that a score of untried virtues will not atone for the one virtue which fails whenever it is put into the fire.—*The Study.*

(6) *Their cure.*

[11278] A traveller in Burmah fell asleep upon the damp hot ground. He was awakened by pricking pains over all the surface of his body. On getting up, he discovered that a swarm of small grey leeches had fastened on his flesh, and were busy sucking his blood. His first impulse was to tear them off with his hand. A native servant, observing his purpose, interposed, with earnest entreaties that he should not touch them. He knew that if the creatures were violently torn off, a portion of their bodies would remain, and produce disease by their corruption. Forthwith the servant gathered a quantity of a pungent herb, steeped it in water, and with the water he bathed his master. The leeches all dropped off harmless. The man went through the bath scathless; but it paralyzed and destroyed his tormentors. From besetting sins we can be delivered only by another, by the grace of God in Christ.

(7) *Exhortations and directions.*

[11279] (1) Seek to mortify such a sin with holy resolution and true contrition. (2) Beware of whatever may be an occasion of its commission (Prov. v. 8, xxiii. 31; 1 Thess. v. 22). (3) Learn to use all carnal enjoyments and pursuits with holy fear. (4) Cultivate the grace most opposite to such a sin. (5) Pray and strive more earnestly against it. (6) Lay hold more confidently on God's enabling strength.—*G. S. Bowes.*

3 Little sins (so-called).

(1) *Lesser sins, if they be neglected, are fatal.*

[11280] It is Satan's custom by small sins to draw us to greater, as the little sticks set the great ones on fire, and a wisp of straw enkindles a block of wood.—*T. Manton.*

[11281] A spark is the beginning of a flame; and a small disease may bring a greater.—*R. Baxter*, 1615–1691.

[11282] Small twigs will prove thorny bushes if not timely stubbed up.—*Swinnock.*

[11283] What great difference is there whether your eternal burning be kindled by many sparks, or by one firebrand? whether you die by many smaller wounds, or by one great one? Many little items make a debt desperate, and the payment impossible.—*Bp. Hopkins.*

[11284] Many minute sins, if they be neglected, are fatal. Minute are the drops which make the rivers, minute the grains of sand, but if much sand be heaped up, it presseth and crusheth. Truly the path of this life is troublous, full of temptation; in prosperity let it not lift us up, in adversity let it not break us. He who gave thee felicity of this world, gave it for thy comfort, not for thy undoing. Again, He who scourgeth thee in this world, doth it for thine amendment, not for thy condemnation.—*St. Augustine.*

[11285] Little sins are pioneers of hell; the backslider begins with what he foolishly considers trifling with little sins. There are no little sins. There was a time when all the evil that has existed in the world was comprehended in one sinful thought of our first parents; and the evil now is the numerous and horrid progeny of one little sin.—*J. Howell.*

[11286] Infidelity to the conscience in small things is intimately connected with a like dereliction in large ones. Little lies are seeds of great ones. Little cruelties are germs of great ones. Little treacheries are, like small holes in raiment, the beginnings of large ones. Little dishonesties are like the drops that work through the banks of the level; a drop is an engineer; it tunnels a way for its fellows, and they, rushing, prepare for all behind them. A

worm in a ship's plank proves, in time, worse than a cannon ball.—*Beecher.*

[11287] A vessel will sink, whether filled with heavy stones or with sand. Fine grains of sand will bury travellers in the desert. Fine flakes of snow, so light that they seem to hang in the air and scarce to fall, will, if they gather over the sleepy wayfarer, extinguish life; if they drift, they will bury whole houses and their dwellers. Fine, delicate sins, as people think them, will chill the soul and take away its life. —*Dr. Pusey.*

[11288] It is recorded of a lighthouse erected on a tropical shore, that it was like to have failed for the most unlooked-for reason. When first kindled, the brilliant light drew about it such clouds of insects which populate the evening and night of equatorial lands that they covered and fairly darkened the glass. There was a noble light that shone out into the darkness and vanquished night, that all the winds could not disturb, nor all the clouds and storms hide; but the soft wings and gauzy bodies of myriads of insects, each one of which was insignificant, effectually veiled the light, and came near defeating the proposed gift to mariners. And so it is in respect to the conscience. There may be a power in it to resist great assaults, to overcome strong temptation, and to avoid fearful dangers; but there may be a million little venomous insect habits, unimportant in themselves taken individually, but fearful in their results collectively.—*Beecher.*

(2) *Lesser sins are to be equally, and in fact more, to be feared than greater.*

[11289] The cumulative character of "small sins," how they compact into ineradicable and frightful habits—*e.g.*, secret impurity—is another aspect I should have liked to have exhibited. Men give way to their "small sins" —let the world have so much. They think they are giving only trifles—"trinkets;" ay, but what became of Israel's "trinkets"? They came out a "golden calf," and the "calf" was worshipped! Nehemiah Rogers, in his "True Convert," has some capital hits on "extenuations" of "small sins," from Aaron's explanation of the "golden calf." Froude has a pertinent remark: "There is a discovery in modern chemistry, that a stream of galvanism passing through a loose heap of powdered metal will convert it to a solid mass."—*Grosart.*

[11290] That which does the mischief is these aphides, these myriad infinitesimal worms, these pestiferous little sins, every one of which is called *white*, and is a mere nothing, a small point—a mote, a speck of dust. Why, many a caravan has been overtaken, smothered, and destroyed by clouds of dust, the separate particles of which were so minute as to be almost invisible.

Many men are afraid that they will be left to some great sin—and they ought to fear that; but they have not the slightest fear of that which is a great deal more likely to bring them to condemnation—the series of petty violations of conscience, and truth, and duty, with which human experience is filled.—*Beecher.*

[11291] The worst sin is not some outburst of gross transgression, forming an exception to the ordinary tenor of a life, bad and dismal as such a sin is; but the worst and most fatal are the small continuous vices which root underground and honeycomb the soul. Many a man who thinks himself a Christian is in more danger from the daily commission, for example, of small pieces of sharp practice in his business, than ever was David at his worst. White ants pick a carcase clean sooner than a lion will.—*Maclaren.*

[11292] These, of all others, I observe the most dangerous, both for their frequency and secrecy: the one increasing them to a large heap, the other so covering them as we see not how they wrong us. The rain that falls in smallest drops moistens the earth, makes it miry, slimy, and dirty: whereas a hard shower that descends violently, washes away, but soaks not in.—*Feltham*, 1668.

[11293] "A famous ruby was offered to this country," relates Grosart. "The report of the Crown jeweller was that it was the finest that he had ever seen or heard of, but that one of its facets—one of the 'little' cuttings of the face—was slightly fractured. The result was, that almost invisible flaw reduced its value by thousands of pounds, and it was rejected from the regalia of England. Again; when Canova was about to commence his great statue of the great Napoleon, his keenly observant eye detected a tiny red line running through the upper portion of the splendid block that at infinite cost had been fetched from Paros, and he refused to lay a chisel on it. Once more; in the story of the early struggles of the elder Herschel, while he was working out the problem of gigantic telescope specula, you will find that he made scores upon scores ere he got one to satisfy him. A scratch like the slenderest spider-cord sufficed to place among the spoiled what had cost him long weeks of toil and anxiety. Again; in the leak of a ship, the measure of the ship to resist the shock of wave or the strain of wind is not its strongest, but its weakest part. The tremendous issues contingent on attention or non-attention to the slightest leak were illustrated in a recent incident in the late deplorable civil war in America. One of the Federal war-ships had what seemed a merely superficial leakage, and, though noticed, it was not thought necessary to countermand the order that she should take part in an approaching conflict. At the crisis of the encounter it was found that the sea-water had been oozing into the gunpowder magazine, and rendered nearly the whole useless. On that powder hung victory or defeat. The 'little leak' went uncared for, and an inferior force won.

The very perfection aimed at, you will observe, necessitated the rejection of gem, and marble block, and speculum, and leaking timber. Even so, were Christianity a less holy thing—a thing that could abide compromise—then what are called 'small sins,' the larger and grosser being acknowledged, might be passed over, 'winked at.'"

[11294] He that will not be persuaded to leap down from an high chamber at once, cometh willingly down by the stairs; and yet the declining degrees of his winding descent make it not less downward to him, but less perceived of him. His leap might have brought him down sooner, it could not have brought him down lower. As I am, then, fearful to act great sins, so I will be careful to avoid small sins. He that contemns a small fault commits a great one. I see many drops make a shower: and what difference is it whether I be wet either in the rain or in the river, if both be to the skin? There is small benefit in the choice whether we go down to hell by degrees or at once.—*Arthur Warwick.*

(3) *We need Divine grace to discover our lesser sins.*

[11295] Just as we need the microscope to detect the animalculæ, equally with the telescope to gaze upon the far-removed heavenly bodies, do we need other than natural eyesight, other than mortal vision, to see our own least sin. By parity of reasoning, if we need Divine help to discover, much more must we need it to "take," and doubly more to "destroy" sin. Our sins never will be truly mortified until they have been slain by Him.—*Grosart.*

(4) *The use of the term "little," as applied to sin, is dangerous.*

[11296] A conceit of the smallness of sin (Gen. xix. 20). Is it not a little one? The devil holds the small end of the perspective glass to sinners. To fancy sin less than it is, is very dangerous; an opinion of the littleness of sin keeps us from the use of means. Who will be earnest for a physician that thinks it is but a trivial disease? and who will seek to God with a penitent heart for mercy that thinks sin is but a slight thing?—*T. Watson.*

4 Mortal and venial sins.

[11297] Mortal sin is a direct and wilful transgression against some Divine law by omission or commission, such as murder, theft, hatred, neglect of Divine worship. Venial sin is a transgression against the end of some Divine law, through inadvertence, or carelessness, or indulgence, such as idle words, "foolish talking, or jesting, which are not convenient" (Eph. v. 4), excess in eating, drinking, or sleeping; insufficient almsgiving, disregard of the minor charities of life. Such a distinction is one of degree, not of kind, and thus a sin which is ordinarily classed as mortal may become venial through the particular circumstances by which it is accompanied; while a venial sin may also become mortal if it passes into a wilful habit, and is persisted in against the voice of conscience. The distinction also presupposes that all sins are, in themselves, hateful to God, and deserving of His wrath; that there is no sin which is pardonable because of its degree, but that all sins, however venial, are pardonable only by an extension of Divine mercy to the sinner. As regards the punishment of sin, all theologians agree that unpardoned sin of every degree deserves it; but some consider that, while mortal sins are punishable eternally, venial sins are punishable by God's fatherly chastisements in this life. In the same way, as regards the pardon of sin, it is considered that while mortal sins are only forgiven through a direct act of absolution, venial sins are forgiven by renewal of grace (especially in the holy Eucharist); each mode of pardon presupposing a degree of penitence conformable to the degree of sin.—*Blunt's Dictionary.*

[11298] The distinctions between venial and mortal sins is more usual with Roman Catholic than with Protestant writers; yet many Anglicans adopt it at least in a modified form. On the whole it seems safest not to draw such a distinction, which is ambiguous and so likely to be abused.—*C. N.*

[11299] Despise not venial sins because they are small, but rather fear them because they are many.—*St. Augustine.*

5 Sins of omission and commission.

(1) *Sins of omission lead to sins of commission.*

[11300] Sins of commission are usual punishments for sins of omission. He that leaves a duty may fear to be left to commit a crime.—*Gurnall.*

[11301] An idle soul stands in the world for a cypher, and God writes the book of life; heaven is no hive for drones; an idle person is fit for a temptation. When the bird sits still upon the bough, then it is in danger of the gun; one sits still in sloth, then the devil shoots him with a temptation; standing water putrifies. Heathens will rise up in judgment against supine Christians.—*T. Watson.*

[11302] Not doing good fits the heart for doing evil. The ground not sown with good corn doth naturally of its own accord bring forth evil weeds. Indeed, it is impossible for him that doth no good, not to do evil: "He that doth not gather with Christ, scattereth; and he that is not with Me is against Me" (Matt. xii. 30). He that fights not for his prince in a day of battle, is his enemy; and that servant who helps not his master in harvest, hinders him. Not to save a life when we may, is to destroy and murder it. The negative Christian will quickly fall to be a positive atheist and heathen. If the heart be empty of good, and

swept clean of grace, the unclean spirit will quickly take up his lodging in it.—*Swinnock.*

[11303] There was an ancient custom among the heathen to crown with a golden crown, not the man who had done no evil to his country, for this were in itself no more than to save him from punishment, but him who had achieved signal benefits. It was thus that a man was to be advanced to this distinction.

But what I had especial need to say, had, I know not how, well-nigh escaped me. For as I was saying that the departure from evil is sufficient to prevent our falling into hell, whilst I was speaking, there stole upon me a certain awful sentence which does not merely bring down vengeance on them that dare to commit evil, but which also punishes those who omit any opportunity of doing good. What sentence, then, is this? When the day, the dreadful day, He saith was arrived, and the set time was come, the Judge, seated on the judgment-seat, set the sheep on the right hand, and the goats on the left, and to the sheep He said, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat." So far, well. It was meet that for such compassion they should receive this reward. That those, however, who only did not communicate of their own possessions to them that were in need, that they should be punished, not merely by the loss of blessing, but by being also sent to hell fire, what just reason, I say, can there be in this? Now most certainly this will have a fair show of reason, no less than the other case; for we are here instructed that as they that have done good shall enjoy those good things that are in heaven, so they, who, though they have no evil indeed to be charged with, yet have omitted to do any good they might have done, will be hurried away with them that have done evil into hell fire. Unless one might indeed say this, that the very not doing good is a part of wickedness, inasmuch as it comes of idleness, is a part of vice—nay, rather, not a part, but a source and baneful root of it. For idleness is the teacher of every vice. Let us not, then, foolishly ask such questions as these, What place shall he occupy who has done neither any evil nor any good? The very not doing good is in itself doing evil.—*St. Chrysostom.*

(2) *Sins of omission, often made light of in every-day life, prove terribly distressing in the solemn moments of death and anticipated judgment.*

[11304] Sins of commission may not perhaps shock the retrospect of conscience; we have confessed, mourned, repented, possibly atoned (?) them. Sins of omission, so veiled amidst our hourly emotions—blent, confused, unseen, in the conventional routine of existence. Alas! could these suddenly emerge from their shadow, group together in serried mass and accusing order! Alas! alas! would not the best of us then start in dismay, and would not the proudest humble himself at the throne of mercy!—*Bulwer.*

[11305] Good Bishop Usher, who, for piety and learning, was honoured through the Christian world, though he was early converted, and feared the Lord in his youth; though he was eminently industrious in private, in his family, in catechizing and instructing, and praying often every day with and for them that were committed to his charge; though he was a constant preacher, and that with judgment and affection; though he was singularly famous for his many worthy pieces which he wrote in Latin and English, yet, after all this diligence and labour, when he came to die, the last words almost which he was heard to speak were, "Lord, in special forgive my sins of omissions."—*Swinnock.*

6 Sins of the past.

(1) *They are sometimes forsaken in outward act, but not in inward thought and secret desire.*

[11306] All the Israelites departed in reality out of the land of Egypt, but they did not depart in affection; wherefore, in the wilderness, many of them repined that they had not the onions and flesh-pots of Egypt. So there are penitents who in effect forsake sin, but not in affection; that is, they purpose to sin no more, but it is with a certain reluctancy of heart to abstain from the mischievous delight of sin. Their heart renounces sin and avoids it, but ceases not often to look back that way, as Lot's wife did towards Sodom. They abstain from sin, as sick men do from melons, which they forbear because the physician threatens them with death if they eat them; but it is troublesome to them to refrain; they talk of them and are unwilling to believe them hurtful; they would at least smell them, and account those happy who may eat them.—*Francis de Sales.*

(2) *They always leave behind them in this life their painful and bitter effects.*

[11307] Have you never heard of fossil-rain? In the stratum of the old red sandstone there are to be seen the marks of showers of rain which fell centuries and centuries ago, and they are so plain and perfect that they clearly indicate the way the wind was drifting, and in what direction the tempest slanted from the sky. So may the tracks of youthful sins be traced upon the tablet of the life when it has merged into old age—tracks which it is bitter and sad remorse to look upon, and which call forth many a bootless longing for the days and months which are past.—*Mursell.*

(3) *They should alway be spoken of with shame, and thankfulness for their pardon.*

[11308] I hate to hear a man speak of his experience in sin as a Greenwich pensioner might talk of Trafalgar and the Nile. The best thing to do with our past sin, if it be indeed forgiven, is to bury it; yes, and let us bury it as they used to bury suicides, let us drive a stake through

it, in horror and contempt, and never set up a monument to its memory. If you ever do tell anybody about your youthful wrong-doing, let it be with blushes and tears, with shame and confusion of face; and always speak of it to the honour of the Infinite Mercy which forgave you. —*C. H. Spurgeon.*

7 Presumptuous sins.

(1) *Their character is that of steady and mischievous moral encouragement.*

[11309] It enters into the soul as a gangrene does into the body, which spreads as well as infects, and, with a running progress, carries a venom and a contagion over all the members. Presumption never stops in its first attempt. If Cæsar comes once to pass the Rubicon, he will be sure to march farther on, even till he enters the very bowels of Rome, and break open the capitol itself. He that wades so far as to wet and foul himself, cares not how much he trashes farther.

When the tenderness of the soul is lost, and its first awe of God and religion broke by a bold sin, it grows venturous, and ready to throw itself upon all sorts of outrages and enormities. It does not demur and tremble as it used to do, when anything gross and foul was proposed to it; but it closes with it readily, and steps undauntedly into that stream that is like to carry away and swallow it up for ever.

This growing, encroaching mischief perhaps first fastens but upon the thoughts, and they take the liberty to settle upon some unlawful base thing, like flies upon a carcase; from these it advances a step farther, and seizes the desires, which presently are carried out with a restless eagerness after the same vile object; and these at length meet with some friendly opportunity, by the help of which they break forth into actual commission; which actual commission grows from one into many, and comes to be frequent and repeated, till it settles into a custom and fixes itself immovably and for ever in a man's behaviour.

This is the nature and quality of presumption; much like what our Saviour says of the mustard seed, which at first is the least of all seeds, but being grown up is greater than all herbs, so that the birds of the air lodge in the branches of it. In like manner presumption first shows itself in a thought, the least of all sins for the matter of it; but from thence shooting up into a custom and a habitual practice, it grows mighty and wide, opens its arms, and spreads out its branches for every unclean bird, every sinful action and abomination, to come and lodge and rest upon.

No man can assign the limits, the *ne plus ultra*, of presumption, where it will stay, and with what pitch of villainy it will be contented; it is as unruly as power, as boundless as rebellion; and therefore, he that would preserve his conscience, and the peace of it, has cause to keep a perpetual guard upon his heart, to save it from a first admission.—*South.*

(2) *Their character is to waste the conscience infinitely more than any other sins.*

[11310] As really as blows and wounds and bruises weaken the body, and by degrees dispose it to its final dissolution, so certainly do some sins shake and batter, and tear down the constitution of the soul. Guilt upon the conscience, like rust upon iron, both defiles and consumes it, by degrees gnawing and creeping into it, as that does, till at length it has eaten out the very substance of the metal. The inward as well as the outward man has his proper health, strength, and soundness naturally belonging to him; and, in proportion, has also his diseases and distempers, arising from an irregular course of living. And every act of presumption is to him as a spiritual debauch or surfeit, things that bring a present disorder, and entail a future decay upon nature. David was a sufficient example of this.—*Ibid.*

[11311] There is a gravitating power about sins of presumption from which the soul rarely ever rises. Every wilful sin hardens the heart and renders it less accessible to converting influences than it was before. One conquest over the conscience makes way for another, and that for a third, till at length this inward monitor becomes "seared as with a hot iron." It has neither voice to speak, nor authority to restrain, nor sensibility to feel. Sceptreless, deaf, stifled, gagged, it dies and makes no sign. Thus evil men and wilful sinners wax worse and worse; because the habit of presumptuous sinning, of tampering with conscience, and resisting the Holy Ghost, forecloses against them all the means of their ever getting better. . . . From transgression to transgression, from lower depth to lower depth, neither heaven nor earth, neither angels nor men have it in charge to interfere: "Ephraim is joined to his idols: let him alone." —*Daniel Moore, M.A.*

8 Respectable sins (so called).

(1) *Their definition.*

[11312] Respectable sin takes on the semblance of goodness, and judges itself by the dignity of its manner and appearance.

(2) *Their nature.*

a. They are more injurious, or a greater mischief, than the baser and more disgusting forms of vicious abandonment.

[11313] The latter create for us greater public burdens, in the way of charity and taxation for the poor, and of judicial proceedings and punishments for public malefactors. They annoy us more, too, by their miseries and the crimes by which they disturb the security and peace of society. And yet it is really a fair subject of doubt whether, in a moral point of view, they have not a wholesome influence and are not a social benefit. They tempt no one. Contrary to this, they repel and warn away from vice every one that looks upon them. They hang out a flag of distress upon every shoal of temptation. They show us the last results of all sin,

and the colours in which they exhibit sin are always disgusting, never attractive. In this view they are really one of the moral wants of the world. We should never conceive the inherent baseness of sin, if it were not shown by their experiment; revealed in their delirium, their rags, their bloated faces, and bleared eyes and tottering bodies, and, more than all, in the extinction of their human feeling, and the substitution of a habit or type of being so essentially brutal. We look down into this hell that vice opens, and with a shudder turn away! Meantime, respectable sin — how attractive, how fascinating its pleasures! Its gay hours, its shows and equipages, its courteous society, its entertainments, its surroundings of courtly form and incident—how delicious to the inspection of fancy! Even its excesses seem to be only a name for spirit. The places of temptation, too, are not the hells and brothels, but the saloons of pleasure and elegant dissipation.

b. Christ makes no distinction between respectable and unrespectable as regards the common wants of salvation.

[11314] Christ comes forth to the world as a lost world. He makes no distinction of respectable and unrespectable as regards the common want of salvation. Nay, it is plain, from His searching rebukes laid on the heads of the priests, the rulers, and others in high life, that He is sometimes moved with greatest abhorrence by the sin of those who are most respectable and even sanctimonious. Hence the solemn universality of His terms of salvation. Hence the declared impossibility of eternal life to any, save by the same great radical change of character—a fact which He testifies directly to Nicodemus, the conscientious inquirer after truth, the sober and just senator, one of the very highest, noblest men in the nation—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He asks not how you appear, but whether you are human. Nay, if you come to Him, like the young ruler, clothed in all such comely virtues, that He is constrained to look on your ingenuous, conscientious character with love, He will tell you, when you ask Him what you are to do to have eternal life, that you must forsake all, and come and follow Him. Decency, correctness, praise—all these are but the guise of your sin, which guise, He will tell you, must be for ever abandoned as a ground of confidence before God, and the sin which it now only adorns and covers must be itself removed, and for ever taken away by the blood of the Lamb.—*H. Bushnell.*

c. Respectable and unrespectable sin are distinctions unknown beyond the grave.

[11315] As sin is sin everywhere and in all forms, the respectable and the unrespectable the same in principle, and when the appearances are different, the same often in criminality, the world of future retribution must, of course, be a world of strange companionships. We are expressly told, and it seems a matter of reason also to suppose, that the spirits of guilty men will not be assorted there by their tastes, but by their character and demerits. Death is the limit and end of all mere conventionalities. The fictitious assortments of the earthly state never pass that limit. Rank, caste, fashion, disgust, fastidiousness, delicacy of sin—these are able to draw their social lines no longer. Proximity now is held to the stern, impartial principle of inward demerit—"That all may receive according to the deeds done in the body." This is the level of adjustment, and there appears to be no other. The standing of the high priests, the scribes, and Pharisees, and the forlorn woman of my text, may be inverted now, or they may all take rank together. And so also many of you, that are now pleasing yourselves in the dignity of your virtues, and the honours of your social standing, may fall there into group and gradation with such as now you even look away from with profoundest distaste or revulsion. The subject is painful; I will not pursue it. I will only remind you that where the lines of justice lead, there you must yourselves follow; and if that just award of respectable sin yields you only the promise of a scale of companionships from which your soul recoils with disgust, there is no wisdom for you but to be as disgustful of the sin as of the companionships, and draw yourself at once to Him who is purity, and peace, and glory, and, in all, eternal life.

9 Secret sins.

(1) *They are sure, under the strain of life and severe temptation, to be discovered.*

[11316] Certain great iron castings have been ordered for a railway bridge. The thickness has been calculated according to the extent of the span and the weight of the load. The contractor constructs his moulds according to the specification, and, when all is ready, pours in the molten metal. In the process of casting, through some defect in the mould, portions of air lurk in the heart of the iron, and cavities like those of a honeycomb are formed in the interior of the beam; but all defects are hid, and the flaws are effectively concealed. The artizan has covered his fault; but he will not prosper. As soon as it is subjected to a strain, the beam gives way. Sin covered becomes a rotten hollow in a human soul; and when the strain comes, the false gives way.

10 The unpardonable sin.

(1) *Various views.*

[11317] Some suppose that the sin against the Son of Man is an offence against a person which may be forgiven, but that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is an offence against a precept or law, and accordingly irreversible and and eternal in its effects.

Others have resolved the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost into final unbelief, impenitence, and hardness of heart, because this state of

mind does in its own nature exclude forgiveness.

Others have supposed that wilful, deliberate, and presumptuous sins, committed by those who were once awakened, and, for a time, made a fair profession of religion, are unpardonable sins against the Holy Ghost.

Others have regarded this sin as equivalent to apostasy, in conformity with the words of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, when he says that it is impossible to restore to repentance those who have fallen away after they have been enlightened, and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost (Heb. vi. 4).

Others have made it to consist in that species of infidelity which manifests itself in sneering at and blaspheming the sacred truths of religion, and in spreading known lies and calumnies against Christianity.

Others have regarded it as hatred directed especially against the Holy Ghost and His operations, and disclosing itself in blasphemous expressions.

Others would have it to consist in a malicious opposition to the truth, when they know and are convinced that it is the truth.

Others think that it cannot be any particular sin, but a general and total rejection of the only means of recovery from sin. And it is the opinion of not a few that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was the very sin which the Pharisees committed, when they attributed the miracles, which our Lord performed by the agency of the Holy Ghost, to the devil, a sin aggravated by this circumstance, that it was committed by those who were eye-witnesses of these miracles, and who had the most convincing proofs of their reality; and consequently a sin which, at least in its outward form, cannot be committed in the present day, seeing that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit are withdrawn from the church. "The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," says Meyer, "may be defined to be the sin which a man commits when he rejects the undoubted revelation of the Holy Spirit, and that not merely with a contemptuous moral indifference, but with the evil will struggling to shut out the light of that revelation; and even goes the length of expressing in hostile language his deliberate and conscious opposition to this Divine principle." And Julius Müller thus expresses his views of the subject: "The nature of this sin is hatred of that which it cognized as Divine, and the blasphemy is the expression of this hatred. He who has observed with some degree of attentiveness the heights of human corruption in its more spiritual forms will have noticed this remarkable phenomenon, how those, who have reached such heights, cannot rest in their aversion to that which is holy and Divine, but as with irresistible violence are impelled to give vent to the same by revilings; how it furnishes them a vile satisfaction to belch forth their most horrifying blasphemies.—*Paton J. Gloag, D.D.*

[11318] It often recurs in the history of temptations, that men accuse themselves of this sin, while the sincere pain, the dread of the sin, the eager longing for God's forgiving grace, for communion with God, that they express, testify that they have not committed it. This sin is not committed by a man, in levity and self-forgetfulness, uttering a doubtless very bad and blasphemous word; or by any one, from weakness, denying his Lord, denying recognized truth or his own conviction, as Peter denied them. It consists rather in an internal perversion in the attitude of the heart to God and the truth, an inner defiance, a conscious yielding to the spirit of lies, not merely a partial but so central a yielding as to involve a permanent enmity to God, and with this a permanent insusceptibility for the forgiveness of sins. We are not, indeed, in the present state in a position in any way to assign sure criteria for this permanency. But so long as truth and uprightness are still in a man's heart, so long as he not only trembles before the holy and almighty God whom he has offended, but also feels in the depth of his heart a longing for God's mercy and His sin-forgiving love, he has not committed the sin against the Holy Spirit. But in this there certainly lies for all of us the earnest requirement to pray: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psa. cxxxix. 23, 24).—*Martensen.*

X. Excuses for Sinning.

1 Their prevalence, facility, and wide extent.

[11319] The ill-doer never wants excuses.—*Bartholomew.*

[11320] He that does amiss never lacks excuse; any excuse will serve when one has not a mind to do a thing.—*Guicciardini.*

2 The type of persons to which excuse-makers belong.

[11321] I never knew a man who was good at making excuses good at anything else.—*Franklin.*

[11322] Petty and shuffling excuses, which satisfy vain and little minds, do but irritate generous ones still more than the fault which they would explain away.—*Princess de Salm-Dyck.*

3 Common excuses for sins of commission.

[11323] If we have told a direct falsehood, we say to ourselves that we were surprised into it: we were asked a question on the sudden; and in the hurry, taken off our guard, we answered it one way when we should have answered it another: it was the fault of the master who asked such a question; why could he not have let it alone? For other acts of sin there is the excuse of temptation: we should not have done it but for bad example, or the suggestion or solicitation of another: it was scarcely our act:

circumstances caused it; and so Providence itself is sometimes made to share the blame with us.—*Dean Vaughan.*

4 Common excuses for sins of omission.

[11324] We scarcely ever neglect a private duty without making to ourselves some excuse for it. We omit or postpone our morning prayer: which of us does not excuse this for the time, and then find that the excuse extends itself indefinitely to other times? The Bible is left unread one day: we have an excuse for it: the next day it is still less thought of, still more easily let alone. We all know how strikingly the language of this very parable is applied in our own Service-book to the subject of attendance at the Sacrament. Those pleas of worldly business or innocent pleasure which are here urged as excuses for neglecting the rich man's supper are reproduced again and again in every generation as apologies for turning away from Christ's Holy Table; they satisfy man, but they are not accepted with God, inasmuch as neither lawful business nor innocent pleasure can prosper without the blessing of Him who assigned or gave it, nor can either the one or the other be taken away with us when we die, or afford any abiding substitute for the loss of the soul and heaven.—*Ibid.*

5 Specimens of the special pleadings and attempted palliations of the habitual self-excusers.

[11325] There are those who never can be surprised into a frank confession. They are always armed against blame. The fault was not theirs; they were interrupted, they were tired, they thought they should have had time, they had meant to get up early, they had learnt every part of the lesson but that, they were only just late, they forgot; and so on, through a labyrinth of pleas and evasions, till all room for the operation of a candid self-judgment is precluded and barred. And when special pleas are exhausted, then there are those who find an excuse for themselves in their own very failings; they are so indolent, they say, constitutionally; they are so weak, so irresolute, so procrastinating; in the tone, it may be, of regret and vexation, but still with the effect of apologizing for the less fault by the greater, for the particular by the general, of escaping censure for the fault by the help of the failing.

6 Their sinfulness.

[11326] There are a great many excuses that are worse than the offence.—*H. W. Shaw.*

[11327] An excuse is worse and more terrible than a lie; for an excuse is a lie guarded.—*Pope.*

7 Excuses viewed in the light of the judgment-day.

[11328] Excuses will never cease till earth ceases. Then they will. Before the judgment-seat of Christ no excuses will be heard; none will be attempted. Then, in the words of Scripture, "every mouth will be stopped." Then, if not before, men will see that there was nothing in their excuses; nothing in those extenuations of sin and ungodliness which sounded so plausible while the din of the world was still in their ears. It will be seen then that the excuse for ungodliness was itself ungodliness. When they said they could not turn to God because they were young, or because they were surrounded by the ungodly, it will be seen that this was (in other words) to say that God demanded of them what He denied the means to perform; like the hard taskmaster who expected to reap where he had not sown, to gather where he had not strawed. They will see then (but too late to be of any use) the meaning of those words, "But He giveth more grace;" more, in proportion to our need; more, in proportion to those circumstances of difficulty and trial in which He knew us to be placed. If they had asked, they would have had. Then, if not before, the promises of God will be felt to have been real, and their failure the result of unbelief. Let us anticipate the disclosures of the great day. Let us be silent now before God; or, if we speak, let it be to accuse ourselves. If we would judge ourselves, it is written, we should not be judged. In frankness of confession lies at once our safety and God's glory. "He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope."—*Dean Vaughan.*

8 An exceptional instance of their lawful and right use.

[11329] When a man makes a mistake let us exercise our ingenuity in trying to find a good excuse for his fault.—*Yahya Main*, 771–848.

XI. The Christian's Attitude in regard to Sinners.

1 Not to countenance or comfort them by our companionship.

[11330] Another way in which a Christian may so act as to encourage and comfort an irreligious man in his godless ways is by seeking his society and acquaintance;—showing him that you think him a congenial spirit, and that you feel it pleasant to be with him. Rather so hold off from them—so be kind to them, but so shrinking from them, as that you may be a constant check on them, a constant discomfort to them—a warning voice telling them always that they are on the road to woe! So, with God's blessing, you may save them: so, at the least, you will clear yourself—clear yourself from the awful charge of having "been a comfort to Sodom!"

XII. Common-Sense Reasons against Sinning.

1 No creature ever got, nor can get, any advantage by sin.

[11331] Whatever gain seems to be in sin, is

but an imagination; and that conceit is put upon men by a cheat, viz., by the deceitfulness of sin, the deceitfulness of their hearts, and the cunning device of Satan. There is neither pleasure, profit, nor credit to be got by sin, nor ever was. Satan, when he presents sin, makes a show of these; but he merely cozens poor sinners that he may ruin them. There is no sinner in the world that can pass a right judgment, take a true estimate of his incomes by sin, but must say his losses are real, great, many; his gains a mere show, an empty delusion. Men seem to gain by sin, when they get or increase their estates by lying, oppression, immoderate cares, with neglect of their souls; but let such consider, the curse of God accompanies whatever is so gotten. And while they gather some heaps of earth, they treasure up wrath, and lose their souls; and then let them tell me what they gain. "What will it profit," &c.?—*D. Clarkson*, 1622–1686.

2 Whatever good we may think to come unto by sinning, it is nothing to that hurt we do our own souls in sinning.

[11332] It were madness to lose a thousand pound to gain a hundred, much more to lose it for nothing, missing of that hoped-for hundred. So it is here in this deceit. In not sinning when we are tempted there is an unspeakable good; now when we sin upon hope of some great good, first we lose the good of abstaining from sin, of keeping ourselves pure from that defilement.—*D. Dyke*, 1642.

[11333] If before we sin we could but feel the sequences, we would never commit it; if we could but see the blindness of mind, the horror of conscience, the hardness of heart that will inseparably follow them, we would certainly shun them; for is any man so mad as to think that if a man felt the surfeit first, before he ate the sweetmeat, that he would then eat it? No, surely: so, could we but see the punishment now that will follow a little pleasure, surely we would reject all the pleasure.—*J. Preston*, 1634.

[11334] They that think to prevent want by sinful courses will in the long run meet that evil in the teeth which they hoped to escape; these are the paths which lead to poverty and want, which whoso walks in shall meet with that armed man.—*N. Rogers*, 1658.

3 Sin embraces us like a serpent, only mortally to sting us.

[11335] For sin embraces us indeed, but it is like the serpent; together with the embrace it mortally stings us. Believe we not then these enchanting songs and fair promises: we shall smart for our credulity afterward? Sin that lay quiet before, like a sleeping dog, will afterward awake and fly in our throats, and of a friendly persuader it will turn a most vehement accuser. The promised pleasure shall vanish with the very act of the sin, and then comes the sting of the guilt. After the sin is throughly done shall we perceive the heinousness thereof.—*D. Dyke*, 1642.

XIII. Punishment of Sin.

1 Is by way of natural result.

[11336] Crime and punishment grow out of one stem. Punishment is a fruit that, unsuspected, ripens within the flower of the pleasure that concealed it.—*Emerson.*

[11337] No closer doth the shadow follow the body than the revenge of self-accusation follows sin. Walk eastward in the morning, the shadow starts behind thee; soon after it is upon thy left side; at noon it is under thy feet; lie down, it croucheth under thee; towards even it leaps before thee. Thou canst not be rid of it while thou hast a body and the sun light. No more can thy soul quit the conscience of evil. This is to thee instead of a hell of fiends, that shall ever be shaking firebrands at thee; ever torturing thee with affrights of more pains than thy nature can comprehend: *Sæva conturbata conscientia* (Wisd. xvii. 11).—*Bp. Hall.*

[11338] Guilt, always present with sin, results from the freedom of the human will and its self-determining power; for without freedom of will there could be no moral guilt. It involves also punishment of sin both in this world and in the world to come. The seed of sin, as of the herb-yielding seed, is in itself; for one unvarying phase of its punishment lies in the almost fatal necessity with which one sin brings in others in its train. It is the law of its being. This temporal retribution, arising by way of natural result from sin, shows how contrary it is in nature to the holy and good law of God, and how surely it is tracked down by an inevitable Nemesis.—*Blunt's Dictionary.*

[11339] When Nicephorus Phocas had built a strong wall about his palace for his own security in the night-time, he heard a voice crying to him, "O emperor! though thou build thy wall as high as the clouds, yet if sin be within, it will overthrow all."

2 Is irresistible when once the fatal point is reached.

[11340] Sinners are like idle swimmers, that go carelessly floating down the stream rather than exert themselves to swim against the current and gain the bank; they must reach the sea at last, and when they hear the breakers, and see the foaming crests of the waves, they become alarmed, but it is too late; the stream is now too strong for them, their limbs are benumbed and enervated from want of exertion; and, unfitted and unprepared, they are hurried into the ocean of eternity.—*D. Williams.*

[11341] One of the affecting features in a life of vice is the longing, wistful outlooks given by the wretches who struggle with unbridled passions towards virtues which are no longer within their reach. Men in the tide of vice are some-

times like the poor creatures swept down the stream of mighty rivers, who see people safe on shore, and trees, and flowers, as they go quickly past; and all things that are desirable gleam upon them for a moment to heighten their trouble, and to aggravate their swift-coming destruction.—*Beecher.*

[11342] Some time since, in Paris, a poor somnambulist was observed pacing backwards and forwards on the top of a house six stories high, at nightfall. An anxious crowd was assembled to watch her movements. She was evidently dreaming of some coming festival, and was humming to herself a lively air. Again and again she approached the verge of the eminence on which she was standing; and again and again she receded, always smiling, and always unconscious. At length her eye caught sight of a candle in an opposite house. She awoke. There was a cry, a heavy fall, and all was over. Thus will it be at last with the ungodly. The light of the other world, as it streams in upon them, will awaken them from sleep; but as they awake, it will only be to discover the precipice on which they have been so long standing, and down the steps of which they must now plunge.—*Morse.*

3 The longer God's anger against sin is delayed the more terrible will its manifestation be.

[11343] The wrath of God is like great waters that are banked up for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the longer a stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course when once it is let loose. It is true, that judgment against your evil works has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt in the meantime is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath; the waters are continually rising, and waxing more and more mighty; and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, that holds the waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped, and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw His hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it.—*Edwards.*

XIV. Delusion of Sin [to believe a Lie].

1 In the case of great impostors.

[11344] It is somewhat remarkable that all the great impostors of the world, as Mohammed, Loyola, Joe Smith, and Andrew Jackson Davis, have professed to receive revelations from heaven. It is probable that some of these have been designing, conscious deceivers; yet, if Satan possesses this power of transformation, may he not have practised this art upon them? Is there anything in the Bible forbidding us to suppose that they did actually receive visions? May not God deliver up such as have departed from His Word and are beyond the pale of mercy to "strong delusions, that they may believe a lie and be damned?" To affirm it may not be irrational or unscriptural. This species of sorcery was much mooted in the days of the Reformation. Luther confidently affirmed that Satan appeared to him in various forms; and yet no one familiar with his cast of mind can charge him with credulity. He often prayed that he might never see a miracle. Calvin never professed to have seen the devil; but he firmly believed in demoniacal possessions. Now, if Satan ever exercises this power at all, the period of the Reformation presented every possible inducement for it. His kingdom was tottering; something must be done; unusual efforts must be exerted to save it. The ardent imagination of Luther, it might be supposed, would be a facile instrument for his legerdemain; whilst the cool and deliberate intellect of Calvin offered no such prospect of success. But he failed. The grace of God fortified the Reformer for the occasion; the mask was penetrated, and the devil fled from the field.

2 In the case of idle and trifling sentimental hearers of the gospel.

[11345] The heart will put a man off with seeming grace instead of saving. A tear or two shed is repentance, a few lazy desires is faith. Blue and red flowers that grow among the corn if look like good flowers, but they are beautiful weeds. The foolish virgins' lamps looked as they had had oil in them, but they had none. There are who live complacently on the facilities and engagement they have in certain practices of devotion and religious exercises, when all the while it is rather themselves as devout, and not their Lord whom they are loving and honouring. —*John Tauler.*

[11346] How miserably do they cheat themselves who, because they hear with pleasure a discourse upon some head of religion, thus garnished according to their idle, trifling humour; and because they are taken with the contrivance of some sentences, or affected with the loudness of the voice, or have their imagination tickled with some fantastical illustrations, presently conclude themselves to be in a religious transport; when the things that have pleased them have no affinity or alliance with religion, befall to it but by chance, and are in themselves things quite of another country!

XV. Practical Counsels.

2 To view sin as a principle and power.

[11347] The more the conscience is fixed not on sins, but in sin, in its nature, effects, and

remedy, the more will any one be able to apprehend its true character.—*Bowes.*

2 To frankly acknowledge sin.

[11348] A German prince was once visiting the arsenal of Toulon, and was told that in compliment to his rank he might set free one of the galley-slaves. Anxious to use the privilege well, he spoke to many of them, and asked the cause of their punishment. All declared it unjust, till he came to one who confessed his sin and deplored it, saying, "I acknowledge I deserve what I suffer." The prince exclaimed, "This is the man I wish to have released!"

3 To give sin no room.

[11349] Travellers tell us that there is a tribe in Africa so given to superstition that they fill their huts and hovels with so many idols that they do not leave room for the families. How many men there are who fill their hearts with the idols of sin so that there is no room for the living God, or for any of His holy principles.—*Bale.*

4 Not to spare sin.

[11350] Use sin as it will use you: spare it not, for it will not spare you; it is your murderer, and the murderer of the world; use it, therefore, as a murderer should be used.—*R. Baxter.*

5 To hate and loathe sin.

[11351] I preach and think that it is more bitter to sin against Christ than to suffer the torments of hell.—*Chrysostom.*

[11352] If hell were on one side, and sin on the other, I would rather leap into hell than willingly sin against my God.—*Anselm.*

[11353] I once walked into a garden with a lady to gather some flowers. There was one large bush whose branches were bending under the weight of the most beautiful roses. We both gazed upon it with admiration. There was one flower on it which seemed to shine above all the rest in beauty. This lady pressed forward into the thick bush, and reached far over to pluck it. As she did this, a black snake, which was hid in the bush, wrapped itself round her arm. She was alarmed beyond all description, and ran from the garden, screaming, and almost in convulsions. During all that day she suffered very much with fear; her whole body trembled, and it was a long time before she could be quieted. That lady is still alive. Such is her hatred now of the whole serpent race, that she has never since been able to look at a snake, even though it were dead. No one could ever persuade her to venture again into a cluster of bushes, even to pluck a beautiful rose. Now this is the way the sinner acts who truly repents of his sins. He thinks of sin as the serpent that once coiled itself round him. He hates it. He dreads it. He flies from it. He fears the places where it inhabits. He does not willingly go into the haunts. He will no more play with sin than this lady would afterwards have fondled snakes.—*Meade.*

[11354] To abhor evil is to have it in a moral detestation; to shrink back from it with a shuddering horror, as one would shrink back from a hissing, stinging serpent, which of a sudden lifted itself up in his path; for it is this shuddering horror that our word implies; which, strong as it is, is certainly not a whit stronger than the word of the original.—*Abp. Trench.*

[11355] Such a state of mind in regard to sin has been the mark and note of God's servants in all times and from the beginning. Witness (1) Jacob's indignation, unabated after forty years, on account of the cruel and treacherous murder of the Shechemites by Simeon and Levi (Gen. xlix. 6); (2) Lot's vexation of spirit at the mode of life of the dwellers in the cities of the plain (2 Peter ii. 8); (3) David's utterances in Psalm ci. 3, cxxxix. 21, cxix. 113, 158; (4) the conduct of Asa and Josiah (2 Chron. xv. 16; 2 Kings xxiii. 20); (5) and, above all, Christ's abhorrence of evil (Psa. xlv. 7; Heb. i. 9; Matt. xvi. 23; John ii. 13–17; Matt. xxi. 12, 13).—*Ibid.*

[11356] In this age of feeble, languid Christianity, we do well to consider whether we enter into God's mind respecting sin, and have our whole moral and spiritual nature engaged in active and lively repugnance to it. To assist us in such an inquiry the following points of self-examination will be serviceable:—(1) How fares it with us in regard to our temptations? (2) In what light do we regard old sins into which we have been betrayed? (3) In what language are we accustomed to talk of sin, and of the violation of God's law? (4) Is sin a burden to our souls?—*Ibid.*

[11357] "Abhor that which is evil." The apostle's word is not dislike it, disapprove of it, have a distaste for it, an aversion to it; it is not even the ordinary word hate, but a word much stronger than any of these—a word which in the original is never used but once in the New Testament. The literal meaning of it seems to be, Hate it as you would hate the river Styx; and to the people to whom he wrote, the idea conveyed was, Hate it as you would hate the way to hell. So it is the way to hell. Hate it always as you would hate the way to hell.—*W. Arthur, M.A.*

6 To flee from it.

[11358] We often say, "Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent." Perhaps very few of you know how a man feels when, for the first time, he finds himself, as I remember finding myself, within a few inches of a serpent—when he sees the cobra di capella rearing its head ready to strike, and knows that one stroke of those fangs is death. That moment he experiences a varied passion, impossible to describe. Fear, hatred, loathing, the desire to escape, the desire to kill, all rush into one moment, making his entire

being thrill. Now to the two men : one is in the face of that serpent ; the other is in the presence of the old serpent, called the devil ; one is in danger of the sting, the other is in danger of committing sin. Which of the two has most reason to flee? O thou that art tempted to sin against God, flee from sin as from the face of a serpent : a far deadlier serpent is that old serpent the devil than the other. —*Ibid.*

7 To avoid it altogether.

[11359] He that goes too near sin to-day may fall into it to-morrow. God has been so indulgent as to give us a latitude and liberty to exercise a pious zeal over ourselves, that we may show how much we fear to offend Him ; and a cautious Christian will say with St. Paul, "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient." Prudence will not always venture to the brink of innocence.—*Boyle.*

8 To remember that sin is its own punishment.

[11360] God sometimes makes sin to be its own punishment, and there needs no more to make men miserable than to give them up to their own vile passions and appetites. Let them be put into the hand of their own counsels, and they will ruin themselves, and make themselves desolate.—*Matthew Henry.*

9 To remember that the rejection of the gospel message is fatal to our moral interests.

[11361] The message of love can never come into a human soul, and pass away from it unreceived, without leaving that spirit worse, with all its lowest characteristics strengthened, and all its best ones depressed by the fact of rejection.—*Alexander Maclaren.*

10 To use our transgressions so as to gain some advantage by our very falls.

[11362] A true Christian may gain some advantage by his very falls. As husbandmen make use of the very thorns and briars that grow in their fields, to stop the gaps and strengthen the fences about them, so should we improve our very sins and failings to fence our souls, that we lie not open to the like temptations for the future.—*Ibid.*

11 To resist sin not in our own strength.

[11363] If I grapple with sin in my own strength, the devil knows he may go to sleep.—*Hannah Adams.*

12 To seek for grace to feel the sins which go with the current of our character.

[11364] Hugh said, "It is very difficult for people to be convinced of faults which go with the grain of their character. If a man of tender feelings says an unkind word, it rankles in his conscience for days ; while a hard man inflicts a score of wounds in a day on his family and dependants, and never has a reproachful pang. A truthful person will not be easy until he has repaired an accidental inaccuracy, whereas a man who habitually boasts and exaggerates tells a hundred lies or conveys a thousand false impressions in a day, and never feels a weight on his conscience. It is easy to repent of the sins which some temptation has led us into against the current of our character ; but it does seem as if nothing but Almighty power could make us feel the sins which go with the current of our characters. And yet this is exactly what constitutes our sin."

13 To realize the solemn issues of our actions especially at critical moments.

[11365] It is said that the waters of the Missouri and Columbia Rivers originate within a few yards of each other, on the top of the Rocky Mountains. One of them flows thence into the peaceful Pacific ; while the other flows in the opposite direction into the stormy Atlantic. Such is the position which the thoughtful sinner occupies. He may launch upon the river of life, and pass thence to the port of eternal bliss, or, failing this, he will float upon the river of death to the dark abyss of perdition.

14 To realize the Divine omniscience as a check to sin and a motive to holiness.

[11366] The omniscience of God is a great check to sin, and motive to virtue. A heathen philosopher advised his pupils to imagine that some distinguished character was always working at them, as the best aid to excellence of life.

DIVISION B.

LIST OF SINS.

CLASSIFIED CONTENTS,

BEING

The Topics illustrated, arranged under their Respective Divisions and Subdivisions, with Consecutive Numbers at left hand for facility of reference.

(*See* Sectional Index, pp. 522, 523. and General Index at the end of last volume.)

PAGE

A.—ABUSE OF SPECIAL PRIVILEGES AND RESISTANCE OF GRACIOUS INFLUENCES.

2 Abused Privileges, Sin of ... 136
3 Quenching the Spirit... 137

B.—AMBITION.

4 Love of Fame 140

C.—APATHY (SPIRITUAL).

5 Indifference, including Coolness ... 141
6 Lukewarmness 143

D.—APOSTASY.

[1] VIEWED GENERALLY.

7 Apostasy 145
8 Backsliding 146

[2] VIEWED MORE IN DETAIL.

(1) As to Man's Relation to God.

9 Departing from God 148
10 Forgetting God 149
11 Forsaking God 150

(2) As to Man's Relation to Christ.

12 Ashamed of Christ 150
13 Denial of Christ 151

E.—COWARDICE (RELIGIOUS).

14 Fear of Man 152

F.—DOUBTS AND DEPRESSION (SPIRITUAL).

15 Fear of Death 152
16 Dejection 154
17 Doubts 154

PAGE

G.—INDECISION.

18 Delay in Religion 156
19 Halting between Two Opinions ... 160

H.—INSINCERITY (RELIGIOUS) AND SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.

20 Cant 162
21 Conventionalities, Religious... ... 163
22 Form of Godliness without the Power 164
23 Formalism 166
24 Hypocrisy 169
25 Pharisaism 172
26 Sanctimoniousness 173
27 Self-righteousness 173

I.—IRREVERENCE, PRESUMPTION, AND PROFANITY.

28 Blasphemy 175
29 Irreverence 175
30 Presumption 177
31 Profanity 177
32 Sacrilege and Misuse of Scripture 179
33 Scoffing 180
34 Swearing 180

J.—MUTILATION OF THE GOSPEL.

35 Adding to the Doctrines of the Gospel 181
36 Preaching another Gospel ... 182

K.—RESTLESSNESS.

37 Restlessness 183

L.—SELFISHNESS.

38 Selfishness 183

M.—SINFUL ANXIETY.

39 Anticipation of Evil 184
40 Borrowing of Trouble 186
41 Over-anxiety 186

CLASSIFIED CONTENTS,

Continued.

PAGE

N.—SUPERSTITION, PREJUDICE, BIGOTRY, AND SCHISM.

42 Bigotry 189
43 Divisions, including Schism 191
44 Fanaticism 193
45 Prejudice 194
46 Sectarianism or Party Spirit ... 196
47 Shibboleths, Use of 197
48 Superstition 198

O.—UNGODLINESS AND THE STATE OF NATURAL AND UNRENEWED MAN.

49 Carnal-mindedness 200
50 Enmity against God 200
51 Impenitence 201
52 Rejoicing in Evil 202
53 Spiritual Blindness 202
54 Unbelief 204
55 Ungodliness 208

PAGE

P.—UNPRODUCTIVENESS AND LIGHTNESS (SPIRITUAL).

56 Fruitlessness 208
57 Idle Words, Use of 209
58 Levity 210
59 Trifling, Religious 211
60 Unfaithfulness 211
61 Unprofitableness 212

Q.—VANITY.

62 Pomps and Vanities, Love of ... 213
63 Vain Thoughts 213
64 Vanity, including Vain-glory ... 217

R.—WORLDLINESS.

65 Alliance, Worldly 222
66 Conformity to the World ... 222
67 Friendship of the World 223
68 Love of the World 224
69 Worldliness 225

DIVISION B.

LIST OF SINS.

2

ABUSED PRIVILEGES, SIN OF.

I. Its Nature.

[11367] With some the voice of God has been ineffective. Sermons innumerable, hymns and psalms innumerable, solemn providences innumerable, and yet they have trampled on all these influences, and are no nearer the kingdom now than they would have been had they lived in Ethiopia, and never seen a missionary. —*Talmage.*

II. Its Folly.

[11368] Here is a man who has been all his life among Bibles and churches. He knows his duty. Christ has been presented to him in all the loveliness of His life, in all the appealing and constraining love of His sacrifice and death. Heaven has been opened before his eyes, and he has ben invited, urged to enter—and there he sits, unmoved. He has had the opportunity for fifty years to save his soul, and all his privileges he has abused. What shall we say of such a man? that he is demented?—*Ibid.*

III. Its Realization.

[11369] Jeine, chief of one of the South Sea Islands, was much opposed to the introduction of Christianity all through his life; but during his last illness he greatly regretted his folly and sin. He often expressed a wish that he had died ten years before. And why? The light of life and love had been shining around him; but he had deprived both himself and his people of the privilege of basking in its beams.—*Gill.*

IV. The Principle of its Punishment.

1 **Its punishment is certain from the very nature of the act itself.**

[11370] In the course of forty years there are 2080 Sabbaths, with all their blessed privileges. What will a man say when called to an account for his neglect or abuse of them? What will the harvest be if the seed-time has been wasted?

[11371] Like as the same sun hardens the clay and softens the wax, it is heat that doth both; causing dryness in the one, and a dissolution in the other: even so the same beams of Divine mercy melt the good heart into a holy fear (Psa. cxxx. 4), and hardens the wicked heart in a state of security: for, upon the goodness of God to men, both in giving and forgiving, do men prove securely evil and rebellious to their Lord. So, even forbearance obdureth (Eccles. viii. 11); how much more do the riches of God's goodness (Rom. ii. 4), which are the hottest beams of that sun, when they beat directly upon our heads! (Prov. i. 32.)—*Ep. Hall.*

[11372] If thou become depraved, because of His goodness, thou art rather belying Him before men. I see many persons thus impugning the long-suffering of God; so that if thou use it not aright, thou shalt pay the penalty. Is God a God of loving-kindness? Yes; but He is also a righteous Judge. Is He one who maketh allowance for sins? True, yet rendereth He to every man according to his works. Doth He pass by iniquity, and blot out transgressions? True, yet maketh He inquisition also.—*Chrysostom.*

[11373] If it be not strong upon thy heart to practise what thou readest, to what end dost thou read? To increase thy own condemnation? If thy light and knowledge be not turned into practice, the more knowing man thou art, the more miserable man thou wilt be in the day of recompense. Thy knowledge will be that rod that will eternally lash thee, and that scorpion that will for ever bite thee, and that worm that will for ever gnaw thee; therefore read and labour to know, that thou mayest do, or else thou art undone for ever.—*Brooks.*

[11374] And the consequence, therefore, is, that while the rain falls in kindness and impartiality equally upon the whole earth, yet, by one and the same operation of the rain, that soil which is cultivated yields with a blessing useful fruits to the diligent and careful cultivators, while that which has become hardened through the neglect of the husbandman brings forth only thorns and thistles. Let us, therefore, view those signs and miracles which were done by God, as the showers furnished by Him from above; and the purpose and desires of men, as the cultivated and uncultivated soil, which is of one and the same nature indeed, as in every soil compared with another, but not in one and the same state of cultivation. From which it follows that every one's will, if untrained, and fierce, and barbarous, is either

hardened by the miracles and wonders of God, growing more savage and thorny than ever, or is become more pliant, and yields itself up with the whole mind to obedience, if it be cleared from vice and subjected to training.—*Origen.*

2 **Its punishment will be in proportion to the measure of favour enjoyed.**

[11375] Its punishment will be in proportion to the measure of favour enjoyed. He spared not the tabernacle of Shiloh because of Israel's wickedness; nor did the temple of Jerusalem, hallowed though it was by so many sacred associations, and so long regarded as the spiritual glory of Judah, escape the stroke of His righteous displeasure against the Jews. Twice it was reared, and twice it fell, a monument to testify to all generations that the greater are men's spiritual privileges, the weightier will be their condemnation, when they presume upon those privileges as giving them a guarantee of security in sin.—*A. R. Fausset.*

3

QUENCHING THE SPIRIT.

I. The Reality and Continuance of the Gift of the Spirit.

[11376] The gift of the Spirit in the earlier times was more like an impulse than a guide; more like an intuition than a clear understanding; had more feeling than thought, more instinct than reflection. But still it was in reality the same One Guide, the Light which lighteth every man, the Revelation of the one truth. Whether it comes like an altogether new faculty, a new sense seeing what was not before seen, and feeling what before was never felt; or whether it comes like a new enlightenment of an old faculty, clearing up what before was dark; whether it be a new eye, or a new light to lighten the old eye; it is still the same gift, the guide sent down from heaven, the messenger from the very presence of God. To us it takes the form of the enlightenment of a faculty common to all men. All men have some sort of conscience. The gift of the Spirit always or almost always comes to us as an enlightenment and a strengthening of that universal possession. Even those who have turned to God quite suddenly will always now describe their own change as an awaking, an opening of their eyes, rather than as a gift of new eyes which they upon the faith, the fervour, the heavenly-mindedness of the early church, until we fancy that it is useless to endeavour to live in their spirit, or to be guided by their rules. In whatever sense, and in whatever measure, they had God's most precious gifts, in the same sense, and in equal measure, are the same gifts within our reach also.

II. Its Import of the Sin of Quenching the Spirit.

[11377] To quench the Spirit, to go on disobeying the calls of your own heart, to stifle the perpetually repeated warnings that recall you from sin and folly, to persist in sins which you know to be sins, to seek temptations which you know to be temptations, to harden your heart when you feel it to be softening, to let pride uphold you in evil, to let indolence or appetite seduce you from good, is as great a sin now as when St. Paul warned his converts against it, and is liable to the same condemnation. Great bursts of sin, sudden and unexpected falls, giving way to some torrent of temptation, this is fearful; and this when it happens costs us bitter tears and most painful repentance. But much more dangerous is the habit of disobedience which marks the soul with a slight mark every day, and heaps these marks one upon another till the whole soul be stained unawares.—*Bp. Temple.*

III. Its Process.

1 **It is one of great subtlety.**

[11378] It is none the less, but all the more, certain and fatal on that account. The spiritual life is marked by great sensitiveness. The slightest influences tell upon it, though for a season the man himself may not be conscious of the fact that he is undergoing deterioration. It may not be the case that he is knowingly indulging in any well-defined and unquestionable sin. But after a while he discovers that somehow the general tone of his spiritual life has been lowered, and that he is not the man he was.

Physical experiences strikingly analogous to this are by no means uncommon. A man begins to suspect at first, and then to be convinced that he is weaker than he was, and has lost much of his buoyancy and cheerfulness. It is not that he has become old. It is not that he is wilfully declining his food. It is not that he is exhausting himself by inordinate labour. It is not that he is wasting his energy by a gay and wicked life. For a season the source of his debilitation may be a mystery, but at length it transpires that there is in the neighbourhood of his house some stagnant pool or decaying matter which is impregnating the air with its poisonous exhalations. Not that he is conscious of any scent in the atmosphere. There is nothing which has roused the repugnance of any sense. But there is a kind of diffused influence which is inhaled at every breath, and which taints every drop of blood it reaches. Now a more palpable and gross mischief would be less injurious and dangerous. He could in such a case put himself upon his guard. But this quiet, noiseless, penetrating, yet impalpable element may have lodged ere he is aware a sufficient quantity of poison in his system to unstring every nerve, break down every tissue, and to mark him for the grave. Now there is around us a moral malaria as subtle and as

destructive. It is an influence, a tone, a subtle something, which without being distinctly challengeable a sin, operates as a moral and spiritual enervator. Its power to work mischief arises in great measure from the fact that you cannot develop it into palpable form, you cannot point to it, you cannot show its clear antagonism to some law of the decalogue. If you could do this, then you could rouse the conscience against it. But you cannot. It is not sin, but a sort of effluence from sin, and an influence towards sin. It is an atmosphere which tends to breed carnality.—*Enoch Mellor.*

IV. Various Ways in which the Spirit may be Quenched.

1 By indulgence of the body.

[11379] The brutalizing power of fleshly sins, of whatever sort, always blunts the conscience, and makes the spiritual eye unable to discern the true nature of God's requirements. A man who has given himself up to these becomes coarse. If the sins be such as men can see, he becomes visibly coarse and earthly. If the sins be of the far wickeder and yet more secret sort, he often retains much outward refinement—refinement and even softness of manner, but coarseness and earthliness of soul; with little sense of disgust at impurity; with a low and animal idea of the highest of all affections. There is little room in such a soul for the loftiness of true generosity, for the humility of a heavenly mind, for the self-surrender of a loyal subject of God. Narrower and narrower through life become his aims and wishes, and still more, his sympathies; poorer, and meaner, and coarser his best feelings; till the very highest that you ever see coming from him is a kind of earthly good nature, and the purity and saintliness of the Christian character, he not only cannot imitate, he cannot even understand it—perhaps not even admire it.—*Bp. Temple.*

2 By worldliness and a life devoted to self and selfish hopes.

[11380] Of all modes of quenching the Spirit, what can be more painful than this? For in such men it often happens that their light is not put out though their heat is. As time goes on they still can see with ever-increasing clearness, an ideal which they are prevented from reaching—aye, or even from seeking, by their ever-increasing weakness. What can be more miserable to think of than the condition of that man whose powers of mind have shown him the truth of God, whose understanding has been too highly cultivated to allow him to shut his eyes to the eternal laws of heaven, who can appreciate, perhaps, till his very heart thrills with admiration, the high examples of love, of self-sacrifice, of a pure and brave service, which history has recorded, and yet who cannot be, and who feels that he never can be, what he himself admires? who feels that while he admires the noble and the true, yet he is not attracted by it? No; he is attracted by the splendour, by the praise of men which accompanies such lives in aftertimes, by the satisfaction to his yearning vanity which such glory would supply, but not by the character itself, nor by its inner worth and substance. This is a painful state, and yet this is not the end. The end of such a character generally is to lose even this much appreciation of what is good, and to retain admiration for nothing but refinement without and resolute will within, to despise all self-sacrifice, all generosity, all nobleness as romantic and weak; and, of course, either to give up religion altogether, or to make a superstition to suit the worldly temper.—*Ibid.*

[11381] You can suffocate a fire with earth almost as expeditiously and quite as surely as you can flood it out with water. There is a force in a vigorous piety to resist very much temptation. A full, hot flame will burn large masses of most unpromising rubbish if you fling upon it only a little at a time. But if you hurry the handfuls, and heap up the pile, you need not be surprised to find the flame hopelessly extinguished underneath. Just so a fine, glowing, exhilarant faith will endure a great amount of this world's pressure, and even transmute some of it into means of usefulness; but it is a dangerous thing to go too far in the experiment. Wealth perhaps did not smother Joseph of Arimathea, but it quite put out Demas of Thessalonica. It depends much on the man. In our day the peril is increased, for the lines between the Church and the world are drawn less tensely than they used to be. Literary fame, political success, social fashion, professional eminence, business prosperity, are to be dreaded and watched. Their appeal is directed towards our very worst passions. They who are sensual have not the Spirit. And there is no more pitiable spectacle on this earth than that of a Christian flame of piety smoking and smouldering under the suffocation of worldliness and sin.—*C. S. Robinson.*

3 By wilfulness.

[11382] The ancients divided all material nature into four elements—fire, earth, air, and water. One element they insisted could not exist in contact with another. Earth defiles the air; the air disintegrates the earth. Water destroys fire; fire decomposes water. Now, in the spiritual universe, *will* works personality. Two persons, independent, cannot both be supreme. A will against a will negatives, so far as its potency extends for that time. When all our curious and over-wise speculation is ended, there remains just this solid fact: God has been pleased to create this race of ours free-willed. He proposes to treat with us upon that plan. He therefore allows Himself to be resisted. He never breaks down any barrier violently. He forces this gift of His Spirit on no one. When, therefore, a man is approached for his good by the Holy Ghost, and, in the pride of new opinion, or in the resolve of old indulgence, erects his

will so as to defy God's will, the Holy Ghost yields. In that domain, and with that purpose, the human prerogative is respected. Then the Spirit ceases to strive, and retires. Almost always there is some point which brings up the question to a crisis. Some surrender is to be made; some committal to be assumed; some pleasure to be forsaken; some companion to be relinquished; some mortification to be endured; some habit to be corrected. It is no matter how the issue is raised, the will rejects it—that is enough. And water does not drench out flame quicker than this wilfulness quenches the influence graciously offered by the Spirit.—*Ibid.*

4 By cowardice.

[11383] We have seen men on the mountains, when all other expedients have failed, busily engaged in subduing a fire in the forests by just "whipping out" the frontiers of the flame. The devil takes pattern from work of this sort. His whips are made of jeers and sarcasms, sneers and ribald abuse. Each thong is venomed as well as stinging; it lacerates wherever it falls, with sharp infliction of pain peculiarly its own. Of course the deep responsibility of the crime lies at the door of any one, be he devil or devil's minion, who frightens any believer from the truth with violence. But there dwells such a power of resistance in each brave heart, that if it yields it cannot escape blameless in defection. Do you suppose Simon Peter meant to deny his Lord out there in the courtyard? Was he in any peril of falling up to the very moment when he encountered that mischievous maid-servant? What the swords of the Roman soldiers could not have done, she did all alone with her double-edged tongue. One word of her irony, and his temper was up, and away went all his courage in an instant. With many young Christians the greatest peril lies here. They think they could bear almost anything; clubs and bludgeons of persecution would be met bravely; but switches and little whips of mean taunting are what they cannot endure. Innuendo, insinuation, besides being very provoking, seem beyond their power to answer. One knows how to meet an argument; but how can he reply to a mere gibe? There is release, however, only in one direction. It is cowardice and pusillanimity unpardonable to surrender thus for mere wounded vanity's sake. Christ says that whosoever is ashamed of Him now, of him will He be ashamed by-and-by in the presence of the Father and of the holy angels. It seems melancholy beyond expression to find a promising believer thrown off entirely by mere ridicule.—*Ibid.*

5 By mere neglect generally.

[11384] The lukewarm church of Laodicea, which neither lived for this world nor for the next, is the type of the commonest of all characters. The Spirit holds before the sight, time after time, soul-stirring visions of what our lives and characters might be. Thoughts start up unbidden before us and bid us walk in a new path, take up a new burden. As we read, as we live with our fellows, as we worship, as we listen, we are touched, we are enlightened, we are half roused to real resolution. But we hear not, or, if we hear, we make no effort; or, if we make an effort, we soon give it up. The greatest thoughts, the noblest thoughts, flit before the minds of men in whom their fellows suspect nothing of the kind; but they flit across as clouds flit across the sky, and those who share in them, yet feel them to be as unreal as those clouds. There is no waste in nature equal to the waste of noble aspirations. We see and are astonished at the wonderful prodigality of all creation, at the millions of animals which just come to the birth and yet are never born, at the minerals scattered everywhere in seemingly useless profusion, at the infinite space of heaven, at the countless host of the stars. But we cannot see the still more wonderful abundance of good and lofty thoughts, of visions of purity and holiness, of ideals of love and unselfishness, which the Spirit of God scatters like seed in the hearts of men, and scatters in vain. In vain, from simple neglect; from neglect, like that of the virgins in the parable, who were quite satisfied so that their lamps burnt while men were looking on, and cared not for the want of oil which would surely put out their fire at last; from neglect such as is described in the parable of the sower: they hear, and then cometh the devil and taketh away the word out of their hearts. Christ stands at the door, and they hear Him knock, but they turn aside and never think of going to the door to let Him in. They hear the voice of truth, but it is no more than the sound of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well upon an instrument. What is the end of such coldness? The end is an incapacity to hear what they have so often heard in vain. In such men there comes at last an utter inability to understand that the message of God is a message to them all. They hear and they understand, but they find no relation between their lives and what they learn. They will be selfish, and will not know that they are selfish; they will be worldly, and will not be able to see that they are worldly; they will be mean, and quite unconscious of their meanness.

[11385] Fire can be just left to go out of itself. It must be fed with fuel, it must be supplied with air. Under the gospel arrangement the law is equally simple and equally fixed. God has appointed certain means of grace, which He intends shall be unceasingly employed by such as desire to grow in the Divine life. The worship of the sanctuary, the services of social prayer, the study of the Scriptures, the observance of ordinances—these are none the less necessary to piety, because they seem so commonplace in exercise. There is a kind of concurrence in the activities which aid progress in personal religion. We work, and the Spirit works too. The instruments we work with are the tools He uses. And He mysteriously

manages them so as to give help to us when we are doing our best. You have seen a parent's hand holding a child's hand in the act of writing; it was not the unskilled fingers which fashioned the letters, but the wise guidance of the experienced teacher which directed the pen. And in the closest analysis of the working of those two wills, it would be exceedingly difficult for any one to say how much each had to do with the fine result of the sentence. God gives His Holy Spirit to them that ask, very much as parents give good gifts to their children. But He makes His presence known through fixed forms of approach. And if these be contemned, it will go hard with the work, and at last the Spirit will withdraw grieved.—*C. S. Robinson.*

6 By neglect of prayer.

[11386] Fire is soon quenched when the air is shut out. There may be abundance of fuel, but it will not burn. Not less essential to the flame kindled by the Spirit is the breath of prayer. God alone bestows grace, but we must ask. "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel." "Ask, and ye shall receive." If we have not, it is because we ask not. "But must I not have the Spirit first in order to pray at all?" Certainly; and has not God already given you enough for this? If you improve what you have, more shall be given. But if you quench the Spirit, even that which you have shall be taken away. St. Jude says, "Ye beloved, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God."—*Enoch Mellor.*

V. Its Infinite Folly as well as its Exceeding Sinfulness.

[11387] A man has lost his way in a dark and dreary mine. By the light of one candle, which he carries in his hand, he is groping for the road to sunshine and to home. That light is essential to his safety. The mine has many winding passages in which he may be hopelessly bewildered. Here and there marks have been made on the rocks to point out the true path, but he cannot see them without that light. There are many deep pits into which, if unwary, he may suddenly fall, but he cannot avoid the danger without that. Should it go out, he must soon stumble, fall, perish. Should it go out, that mine will be his tomb. How carefully he carries it! How anxiously he shields it from sudden gusts of air, from water dropping on it, from everything that might quench it! The case described is our own. We are like that lonely wanderer in the mine. Does he diligently keep alight the candle on which his life depends? Much more earnestly should we give heed to the warning, "Quench not the Spirit." Sin makes our road both dark and dangerous. If God gave us no light we should never find the way to the soul's sunny home of holiness and heaven. We must despair of ever reaching our Father's house. We must perish in the darkness into which we have wandered. But He gives us His Spirit to enlighten, guide, and cheer us. In the works of nature, but more clearly in the Volume of Inspiration, He has made known to us His will. But because we are so sinful as not to see and profit by these signal-posts to heaven, He also, by the inward light of the Holy Ghost in the soul, helps us to behold, understand, and obey the truth.—*Rev. Newman Hall.*

VI. Its Danger.

1 It is so easy to quench the holy fire in our souls.

[11388] It does not require a high hand put forth in a heinous sin to turn back all God's favour. When the closet of private devotion is forsaken, when the ashes are growing cold on the family altar, when the Word of God is sought only rarely or carelessly; in one word, when we show that we tire of the Spirit, or are weary of His presence—then we need to do nothing more. Just like any friend whom we causelessly affront, He withdraws till we shall come to a better mind and better treatment.—*C. S. Robinson.*

2 It is so hard to have the holy fire rekindled in our souls.

[11389] Everybody knows how hard it is to rekindle a fire that has been quenched, drenched, smothered, scattered, neglected. When He who illumines leaves us, we are in the dark; when He who warms us leaves us, we are chillier than ever; when He who softens leaves us, our hearts harden more and more. Somebody said once, as he lay under a discipline like this: "One had better grieve every friend he has, and wander homeless, and die deserted, with no one to watch for him, or to pray for him, or to bury him, than to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and be abandoned."—*Ibid.*

VII. Homiletical Hints.

[11390] Man has the tremendous power of resisting this force—quenching the Holy Ghost. How?

1. By neglect of prayer. (*a*) Private. (*b*) Family. (*c*) Public.
2. By neglect of self-examination.
3. By neglecting to attend the means of grace.
4. By decreased activity in spiritual work.
5. By silencing the voice of conscience.
6. By resolutely determining not to yield to conviction.

4

LOVE OF FAME.

I. Its Folly.

1 As evinced in the worthlessness of fame.

[11391] How idle a boast, after all, is the immortality of a name! The idol of to-day

pushes the hero of yesterday out of our recollection ; and will, in turn, be supplanted by his successor of to-morrow.—*Washington Irving.*

[11392] I have seen a great many people trying to climb up in social position and become famous, having an idea that there is a safe place somewhere far above, not knowing that the mountain of fame has a top like Mont Blanc, covered with perpetual snow.—*Talmage.*

[11393] Wealth, uncertain as it is, is more steadfast, and, transient as it is, is more enduring, than mere fame. Byron pronounced it worthless—

"Tis as a snowball which derives assistance
From every flake, and yet rolls on the same,
Even till an iceberg it may chance to grow ;
But, after all, 'tis nothing but cold snow."

2 As evinced in the disasters and disappointments attendant upon most of those who seek great things for themselves.

[11394] The spirit of ambition may work in you, as the grace of God did in Paul, mightily ; and yet of this spirit you may reap nothing but dishonour and disgrace, and covering of the face with shame and confusion. Absalom ran with all his might and with all his strength for the prize of a kingdom ; but that which he got by his running was an ignominious and untimely death, being hung by the hair of his head on the bough of a great oak (2 Sam. xviii. 9), as he fled to save his life from the pursuit of David's men, in which posture three darts were thrust through his heart by Joab. Many ambitious climbers in all ages have met with the like disasters and disappointments. All histories almost fill the world with examples of this kind, that men, before they come to the top of the ladder, fall down and are broken, and crushed to pieces ; they wholly miscarry, and yet nothing but a covering of darkness, instead of that grandeur or greatness which they lift up their hearts unto ; and many who did compass the grandeur and greatness in the world which they sought after were soon dispossessed.—*John Goodwin*, 1633–1665.

3 As evinced in the unsatisfactory nature of the awards of fame.

[11395] Fame is like a river, that beareth up things light and swollen, and drowns things weighty and solid.—*Bacon.*

II. Its Evils.

[11396] The love of fame is not the love of virtue, nor has it any virtue in it. And when it becomes a passion, as it often does, it is a heinous evil. It tramples on the rights of humanity, and often sheds the blood of nations. —*Dr. Thomas.*

5

INDIFFERENCE, INCLUDING COOLNESS.

I. Its Prevalence.

[11397] Is it true that nowadays the ranks of the indifferent are so many, so long, so crowded? Is not the present a time in which religion is the staple of conversation, the subject of as many articles in magazines and serials even as politics or science, the common ground on which not only those who are intensely concerned with it meet together, but also where idle gossip finds its field for folly, backbiting, and slander? This is true, and yet it is almost because of this, rather than in spite of this, that about the things of God, the things that really belong to their peace, men are indifferent. Those who discuss, dispute, argue the most cleverly ; those who are the quickest to detect heresy or to scent schism ; those who can with unerring accuracy catch the ring of some party word, or discern the posture, vestment, variation in ceremonial which marks some school in the Church, may very likely be those who yet are perfectly indifferent to the real truth of Christ's gospel, and may never once in their lives have sought to live according to it. Who, then, amongst us are the indifferent and thoughtless?—*R. F. L. Blunt.*

[11398] Is earnest faith declining? The tendency seems to be decidedly in this direction. Even in secular affairs, "The Times" tells us, "Nothing is more remarkable than the complete extinction of that keen interest, that intense faith, and that eager hope, which manifestly inspired the politicians of half a century ago, and made their influence felt among all classes of the community." In religious circles it is common to hear comments on the indifference of a large number of persons who go to church, the absence from their minds of anything like powerful convictions as to religion, and the easy *nonchalance* with which they pass by great and solemn inquiries, the importance of which used to be felt by nearly all. In regard, again, to the class that do show sincere regard for religion, the tendency on the part of those who are prospering in the world to give great importance to the most superficial matters in social life, is a serious feature. It does not seem as if the church of the future were going to have an easy time. Influences of a very hurtful kind may, to a large extent, suck out the life-blood of the Christian community, and greatly reduce its spiritual power. The cry seems to sound very loud in the ears of all who value an earnest faith—"Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things that ye have wrought." Ministers of the gospel, especially, who have the responsibility of guiding the Christian Church, have need to remember that if they would see an earnest faith on the part of their people, nothing is more necessary than that their own hearts be pervaded by it, and

if they would see that faith controlling other men's lives, it must very really control their own.—*A. M. Fairbairn.*

II. Its Definition.

[11399] Indifference is that listless and careless, or thoughtless and unconcerned, or cynical and cold, or patronizing and contemptuous treatment of religion which is so common, so dangerous, so fatal.—*R. F. L. Blunt.*

III. Its Nature.

1 It is a species of insanity.

[11400] The fervour of the devotee, the fanaticism of a Stylites, the wild enthusiasm of a starving friar who "becomes mad" for Christ's sake—this we may deplore as irregular, bigoted, narrow in its view of what Christ would have men become ; but at all events this sort of life is pardonable because it is the exaggeration and perversion of what is noble ; but indifference, carelessness about the whole state of existence in this world and in all worlds to come, about the fate of the human race and the issue of the kingdom of God—heedlessness, thoughtlessness as to whether we shall attain to the likeness of God and dwell with Him for ever, or whether we shall sink lower and lower into the abyss and know the fellowship of evil here and hereafter—this is almost insanity, this would be deemed insanity but that it is so common that we shrink from giving it a title, which, if pressed, would go far to include the greater part of the human family.—*Ibid.*

IV. Its Diverse Forms.

1 The cynical.

[11401] You meet some persons who are the very cynics of religion, morose and snarling, contemptuous and scornful, cold and evil-natured. This is the grossest form of indifference. When one hears them talk of Christ and His religion with a half-patronizing tone, or reads their writings in which His character and His works are subjected to a criticism which is simply insolent, one is appalled by such flagrant indecency, and at the outrage on the finer feelings of reverence, which is instinctive in all but the coarsest minds, whenever the things of God are brought under discussion. This is an indifference which is not common, but yet the infection of which may quickly spread, if ever the poison of a profane irreverence has prepared any section of society for its reception.—*Ibid.*

2 The fashionable.

[11402] There is the indifference of fashionable formalism. There are men and women, by thousands, to whom religion is merely the adoption of a certain conventional habit of respectable observance. They are Christians because they live in Christendom ; they are Protestants because they live in England ; they are church people because their parents were so. In church there is an indifference about the service, the prayers, the sermon. It is a ceremony performed not for God's glory, but for custom's sake, as "the right thing to do," not because it is a privilege and a joy. And from one Sunday to the next, unless there is a custom of family prayers, the question of religion, the striving after the Christ-like life, the desire to please God, the doing each day's duty for Christ the Master, simply never once strikes them as forming any part of the Christianity which is professed on the Sunday. The service, the preacher, the doctrine, the style, may be occasionally discussed in intervals between other topics of the day—politics, amusements, or the weather—but that is all. About the things of Christ and of God there is really the most supreme indifference. Across the smooth surface of that mental and spiritual indifference not a ripple is ever stirred by any breath of life from above, or any blast of terror from beneath.—*Ibid.*

3 The hypochondriac.

[11403] There is the indifference which fills the soul in the intervals between religious excitement. With some religion is a sort of intermittent fever, and between the attacks is a dull season of spiritual stupor. Listless, lethargic, torpid, the soul lies almost dead. The indifference in which it dwells is due to the fatal reaction which in spiritual as in physical things always follows, and always must follow, upon excitement. It is the case of the drunkard after the debauch has exhausted him, of the opium-eater after his fit of ecstasy or of tranquil bliss has worn itself out. So here, the religious hypochondriac is waiting for another revival sermon, another mission, another church fast or festival, to rouse him, and meanwhile he is indifferent. Without a stimulant he will always be indifferent ; without that first stimulant he would never have known anything of religious fervour : and now he has known it, nothing will bestir him but its repetition ; and with the soul as with the body, the strength of the stimulant must increase if it is to be effective. More potent, more arousing, more vehement the revivalist preacher, the revivalist meeting, the revivalist service must become, or else the indifference will be chronic, and the stupor will deepen into coma, and the coma will pass into death.—*Ibid.*

4 The lifeless.

[11404] There is another class of indifferent ones—how much more numerous than all of these put together !—in whom there is a lack of real, lasting interest in the things of God, because they really care so little, although they are neither cynics nor hypocrites, neither formalists nor hypochondriacs. This is that very wide class, to which I fear we all probably join ourselves sometimes, of persons who take only the most languid interest, and that only a transient interest, in those things of God which ought to be the very aim, as they are the object, of our

existence ; yes, I say it advisedly, the very aim and object of our existence. Why are we here at all? What is our *raison d'être?* Have we been created and called into existence that we might just enjoy ourselves, that self might be the god we are to fall down and worship?—*Ibid.*

V. Its End.

[11405] Indifference in religion commonly ends in toleration of naturalism and deism.—*Pope Leo XII.*

VI. Its Remedy.

[11406] If you would keep warm take these four directions : 1. Get into the sun : 2. Go near the fire (is not My Word like a fire?) : 3. Keep in motion and action, stirring up the grace of God within us: 4. Seek Christian communion—"How can one be warm alone?"—*Philip Henry.*

VII. Preacher's Duty in Regard to this Sin.

[11407] It is this which it is one part of the preacher's duty to attack. He must, if he is to do the slightest good, stir up an interest in the things he talks about ; if he cannot do this, his mission and work are at an end. To arouse and awaken men to a sense that the things of Christ are the things on which life and death depend, beside which all other things are vapid and vain —this must ever be his first work. When this is accomplished and genuine interest has been excited, then he may endeavour to direct, guide, and deliver from false notions, to teach, apply, and make practical the religion he has commended.—*R. F. L. Blunt.*

6

LUKEWARMNESS.

I. Its Definition.

[11408] Lukewarmness is the state in which there is no real fervour, no real love, and yet there is an appearance of it, the pretence of it. It is more dangerous to seem to have love without having it than to neither have nor seem to have it. The self-deceiver is in a more critical position than the unbeliever.

II. The Portrait of the Lukewarm.

[11409] Those who are lukewarm are neither earnest for God nor utterly indifferent to religion. They are perhaps best described as those who take an interest in religion, but whose worship of their idol of good taste or good form leads them to regard enthusiasm as ill-bred and disturbing, and who have never put themselves to any inconvenience, braved any reproach, or abandoned any comfort for Christ's sake, but hoped to keep well with the world, while they flattered themselves that they stood well with God.—*W. B. Carpenter.*

III. Characteristics of Lukewarmness.

[11410] Lukewarmness is infectious like warmness and coldness. Tepid water will cool boiling water. One lukewarm Christian will sensibly reduce the temperature of a whole church, and will chill the most fervid to some extent.

[11411] Lukewarmness in a church is like the heat of a corpse exposed to the sun : it is never enlivened, it is never animated ; even its warmth is offensive.—*Dr. Jenkyn.*

[11412] 1. It may exist where it is unsuspected. It may co-exist with an unhesitating assent to all the doctrines of the Christian faith ; with a credible profession of religion and the performance of many religious duties.

2. It may occur at any period of the Christian course. We are not to regard it as a thicket, long and fearful, in a certain part of the road along which we have to travel, but which, once passed, is passed for ever. It seizes upon some just after they have been convinced of sin ; upon others, just when they have found mercy ; upon others, after many years of Christian progress and activity. In every case how deplorable is the result!

3. There is no office in the Christian church that secures its possessor against it. A fatal lethargy sometimes seizes upon those who have been eminent for usefulness ; and though they may continue to prosecute their labours with a machine-like energy, the spiritual force on which success depends is gone.

4. When any man is affected by it you are certain to find in him such things as these—self-satisfaction, spiritual pride, the spirit of detraction. He can always find or suggest faults in those whose zeal puts his lethargy to shame.

5. Wherever it exists it will be more or less manifested in carelessness with regard to the means of grace, and in languor and lack of reverence in the worship of God. The veriest trifles will keep its victim away from the sanctuary, and when he goes thither he thinks of little else besides his own ease and comfort.

6. The man who has yielded to it is sure to make much of hallowed feelings which were once enjoyed. By the recollection of them he seeks to compensate himself for the absence of such feelings now. He is apt to take refuge in a perverted conception of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

7. The man who has ceased really to care for his own soul will cease to care for the souls of others. Neither by money, nor prayer, nor personal labour, will he do anything considerable for the redemption of his fellow-men.

By these signs examine yourself and see

whether this blight has fallen on *you*.—*Samuel D. Waddy.*

IV. Its Diagnosis.

[11413] As with the body so it is with the spirit. When the extremities are cold and languid the defect has its beginnings in the heart. There is life, but a deficiency of vital power. This is the true cause of lukewarmness. The heart is not strong enough to send the blood to the extremities.—*Bowes.*

V. Its Causes.

[11414] 1. A low estimate of the Christian standard of the Divine law. Many who would not be parties to the publication of a mutilated edition of the Scriptures ignore large portions of them—portions by which they are rebuked, and by which they would be made uncomfortable if they seriously considered them. But they will not consider what demands God makes upon them as those who profess to be His children; they contentedly live as though He had made no such demands.

2. Convenient doubts as to the manner in which the Scripture declarations as to the final destiny of the wicked are to be interpreted. In various ways the lukewarm persuade themselves that, even if it comes to the worst with them, there really is not very much to be afraid of. But there *is* a "wrath to come" from which it behoves and becomes us to flee.

3. A low estimate of the redeeming power and purpose of Christ with regard to our race. The lukewarm have ceased to ponder such inspiring declarations as 1 John i. 7–9; Matthew i. 21; Psalm lxxii. 8, 17. The dignity and the blessedness of serving Christ are not apprehended.

4. From all these things, worldly-mindedness follows as a matter of course, and becomes itself a cause of lukewarmness. Christ's command and promise (Matt. vi. 33) are utterly disregarded. Coming to the sanctuary with wordliness in their hearts, and consecrating to the glory of God nothing that they cannot very well afford to spare, their so-called sacrifices and worship are rejected by Him, and upon them no hallowing influences descend.

5. Neglect of the means of grace. This also is at once a result and a cause. The means of grace, public and private, are neglected because the professor is lukewarm, and the neglect confirms him in his lukewarmness.

6. Hurtful companionship. This is found elsewhere than among the openly ungodly—among others who have fallen into lukewarmness. Alas, how often is the zeal of the new convert chilled by contact with those who have lost their "first love" for Christ, and yet continue in connection with His Church! And how terrible is the guilt of those who not only destroy themselves, but hinder those who, but for them, would press forward in the kingdom of God:—*Samuel D. Waddy.*

[11415] 1. As abstinence or neglect of food will soon bring the body into a pining, languishing condition, so if the means of grace be not diligently improved, the soul will soon languish.

2. Surfeiting the soul with sensual pleasure is another great cause of spiritual death. If Samson sleep on Delilah's lap she will betray him into the hands of the Philistines.

3. Inactivity and sloth in salvation and generation work is another cause of spiritual deadness. Physicians observe that, as too violent exercise, so too much rest or a sedentary way of living, is prejudicial to the health of the body. So if we do not exercise ourselves unto godliness, and abound in the work of the Lord, the spiritual strength will decay.

4. The contagion of ill example, of a carnal world, has a fatal influence. It is exceeding dangerous for those who have the seed of all diseases in them to frequent the company of those who are infected with the plague.—*E. C. Erskine.*

VI. Its Danger.

[11416] It is great. 1. Because of the difficulty of awaking the lukewarm to a sense of their true state. Were they openly profligate or heretical, there might be some hope of doing so; but how vain usually is the attempt, while so much that is outwardly respectable and orthodox still cleaves to them! When you have done your utmost they will repeat the Laodicean boast! (Rev. iii. 17.) Every wise man will be anxiously on his guard against a condition which brings on such fatal insensibility.

2. Because the lukewarm stand ready for apostasy. They are open to temptations of every kind, and they have laid down the weapons by which alone temptation can be victoriously repelled. No matter how eminent a lukewarm professor may have been, there is no depth of notorious depravity into which he may not fall.—*Samuel D. Waddy.*

[11417] Chill after warmth is always dangerous; but how many, after being warmed at the church, directly they get out of it, begin some worldly conversation, and lose all the warmth they obtain!—*G. S. Bowes.*

VII. Its Remedy.

[11418] The remedy for lukewarmness is not a change of manner, not adopting a new form of speech, not going through a new round of duties, but a stirring up of the central fire—the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost whom He hath given us.

[11419] The best remedy is an obstinate persisting in prayer until our affections be moved, and a regular habit of going to religious duties with a prepared and meek heart, thinking more of obtaining communion with God than of spending so many minutes in seeking it.—*H. K. White.*

7

APOSTASY.

I. Its Possibility.

[11420] The possibility of a good man "falling from grace" was one of the grand questions in the theological controversies of past times. That a good man may relapse into depravity—(1) is manifestly possible. To prove that a good man or a good angel is bound by the necessity of his nature to continue in the course of holiness, is to prove that he is no longer free and responsible, but a slave and a machine. (2) Is very easy. Two things render the fall of a good man very easy in this world. (*a*) The force of the remaining depravity within him. (*b*) The force of unholy influences about him. (3) Is historically proved. Good men in all ages have apostatized — David, Peter, Demas, &c., &c. (4) Is Biblically assured. The exhortations to perseverance and the warnings against apostasy which run through the inspired Word imply the fearful liability of righteous men to "fall down before the wicked."—*Dr. Thomas.*

II. Its Nature.

[11421] It is a downright apostasy from God, a direct renouncing of Him, and rejecting of His truth after men have owned it, and been inwardly persuaded and convinced of it; and so the apostle expresseth it in this epistle, calling it an "apostasy from the living God, a sinning wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth." It hath all the aggravations that a crime is capable of, being against the clearest light and knowledge, and the fullest conviction of a man's mind concerning the truth and goodness of that religion which he renounceth; against the greatest obligations laid upon him by the grace and mercy of the gospel; after the free pardon of sins, and the grace and assistance of God's Spirit received, and a miraculous power conferred for a witness and testimony to themselves, of the undoubted truth of that religion which they have embraced. It is the highest affront to the Son of God, who revealed this religion to the world, and sealed it with His blood; and, in effect, an expression of as high malice to the author of this religion as the Jews were guilty of when they put Him to so cruel and shameful a death.—*Archbishop Tillotson.*

III. Its Causes.

[11422] A sin of this heinous nature is apt naturally either to plunge men into hardness and impenitency, or to drive them to despair; and either of these conditions are effectual bars to their recovery. And both these dangers the apostle warns men in this epistle (chap. iii. 12, 13), "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, to apostatize from the living God: but exhort one another daily, whilst it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."—*Ibid.*

[11423] Or else the reflection upon so horrid a crime is apt to drive a man to despair, as it did Judas, who, after he had betrayed the Son of God, could find no ease but by making away himself; the guilt of so great a sin filled him with such terrors that he was glad to fly to death for refuge, and to lay violent hands upon himself. And this likewise was the case of Spira, whose apostasy, though it was not total from the Christian religion, but only from the purity and reformation of it, brought him to that desperation of mind which was a kind of hell upon earth. And of this danger likewise the apostle admonisheth (chap. xii. 15): "Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God," or, as it is in our margin, "lest any man fall from the grace of God," "lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you;" and then he compares the case of such person to Esau, who, when he had renounced his birthright to which the blessing was annexed, was afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, rejected, and found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.—*Ibid.*

[11424] Look to your secret duty; the soul cannot prosper in the neglect of it. Apostasy generally begins at the closet door.—*P. Henry.*

IV. Characteristic Attitude of Apostates.

[11425] All betrayers of the truth feign love for the truth, and use the sign of the kiss in token of affection, when they betray the word of God to His enemies.—*Origen.*

V. Reasons and Motives for avoiding this Sin.

1 It brings reproach upon the cause of religion.

[11426] When men turn apostates from the power and profession of the gospel of Christ, presently wicked men are apt to blaspheme, and to conceive desperate prejudices against, our high and holy calling.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

[11427] Apostates cast a disgrace upon religion. The apostate (saith Tertullian) seems to put God and Satan in the balance, and having weighed both their services, prefers the devil's services, and proclaims him to be the best master. In which respect the apostate is said to put Christ to open shame (Heb. vi. 6). This dyes a sin in grain, and makes it greater. It is a sin not to profess Christ, but it is a greater to deny Him. Not to wear Christ's colours is a sin, but to run from His colours is a greater sin. A pagan sins less than a baptized renegade.

2 It causes reproach and infamy upon the apostate himself.

[11428] In the long line of portraits of the

doges, in the palace at Venice, one space is empty, and the semblance of a black curtain remains as a melancholy record of glory forfeited. Found guilty of treason against the state, Marino Falieri was beheaded and his image as far as possible blotted from remembrance. That dark spot more conspicuous than any of the pictures: so are apostates from the church. Take care lest we are one day painted out of the church's gallery, and only remembered with infamy.—*Spurgeon* (*condensed*).

3 **It places men in an awfully hazardous state.**

[11429] Those who are guilty of this sin provoke God in the highest manner to withdraw His grace and Holy Spirit from them, by the power and efficacy whereof they should be brought to repentance; so that it can hardly otherwise be expected but that God should leave those to themselves who have so unworthily forsaken Him, and wholly withdraw His grace and spirit from such persons as have so notoriously offered despite to the Spirit of grace. I do not say that God always does this; He is sometimes better to such persons than they have deserved from Him, and saves those who have done what they can to undo themselves, and mercifully puts forth His hand to recover them who were drawing back to perdition; especially if they were suddenly surprised by the violence of temptation, and yielded to it not deliberately and out of choice, but merely through weakness and infirmity, and so soon as they reflected upon themselves, did return and repent. This was the case of St. Peter, who, being surprised with a sudden fear, denied Christ; but being admonished of his sin by the signal which our Saviour had given him, he was recovered by a speedy and hearty repentance. And so likewise several of the primitive Christians, who were at first overcome by fear to renounce their religion, did afterwards recover themselves, and died resolute martyrs; but it is a very dangerous state, out of which but few recover, and with great difficulty.—*Abp. Tillotson.*

VI. The Real Position of the Apostate.

[11430] The apostate toward God and His kingdom is an apostle of the devil.—*Aldus Manutius.*

VII. Its Antithesis.

[11431] Apostasy from error is laudable.—*Thrasimund.*

8

BACKSLIDING.

I. Its Forms.

[11432] There are many kinds and degrees of defections from Christ. (1) Sometimes it is more general, of the body of a church and nation together; (2) Sometimes it is more open and avowed, by abandoning the very profession of religion; or it is more hid and secret, when, though there be still a profession of religion, yet the heart maintains a close correspondence with sin; (3) There may be a partial or a total falling off from Christ; the reprobate fall as a stone into deep water; the godly themselves may be guilty of a partial and temporary falling. They are like wood or cork falling into water, though they sink at first yet they rise again by faith and repentance.—*Erskine.*

II. Its Characteristics.

1 **It is generally gradual.**

[11433] Like the ebbing tide, wave after wave it breaks upon the shore at apparently the same point, and it seems impossible to tell, by any two or three separate waves, whether it is the ebb or flow; but watch a few minutes, and the outgoing waters soon tell their own tale.

[11434] A man usually backslides very gradually, by little things. He yields to the temptation to compromise in little matters, to omit little duties, to indulge in little sins, as they appear; and by these littles thousands and thousands relapse into their former state of worldliness and folly.—*Melvill.*

III. Its Signs and Symptoms.

[11435] 1. Disinclination for prayer and serious things. Not wholly neglecting sacred duties, it may be, but going through them with formality; reading the Scriptures lesson-wise; critically, unspiritually, without interest; content to attend ordinances without gaining profit, and without inquiring why. 2. Less serious views of sin—thinking little of sins and infirmities which once caused grief and concern; less afraid of going into the atmosphere of temptation; books, places, persons; no fear of "the enchanted ground." 3. Less willingness to receive reproof, even when given by the kindest friends and in the kindest manner. 4. A self-justifying spirit, glad to find excuses for defending what was once disowned and forsaken (2 Cor. xii. 21; Hos. xii. 7, 8). 5. A censorious spirit, ready to find fault with others, and judge harshly of conduct and motives. 6. A spirit of worldly compromise; love of society, dress, display, &c. 7. Little caring for the trials of others, and trying to hide it by liberality and attentions to external kindnesses. 8. Being satisfied to live upon past experience. "We once were sure of being in Christ!" "We have known conviction," &c. 9. Discontinuing a particular sin, but without repentance; the heart still hankering after it.—*Bowes.*

[11436] The symptoms of spiritual decline are like those which attend the decay of bodily health. It generally commences with loss of appetite, and a disrelish for wholesome food,

prayer, reading the Scriptures, and devotional books. Wherever you perceive these symptoms, be alarmed, for your spiritual health is in danger; apply immediately to the Great Physician for a cure.—*Payson.*

IV. Its Degrees.

[11437] 1. Neglect of secret prayer (Job xv. 4; Isa. xliii. 10).
2. Disregard of the Bible (Jer. vi. 19; Hos. iv. 6).
3. Forsaking the means of grace (Neh. x. 39; Heb. x. 25).
4. Levity in conversation (Eph. v. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 11).
5. Worldly-mindedness (2 Tim. iv. 10; 1 John ii. 15).
6. Covetousness (Luke xii. 15; Col. iii. 5).
7. Light thoughts of sin (2 Kings xvi. 41; Matt. xxii. 5).
8. Intemperance (Prov. xxii. 29–32).
9. Love of pre-eminence (Prov. xvi. 18; 3 John ix. 10).
10. Indulgence in secret sins (Num. xxxii. 23; Eccles. xii. 14).
11. Falling into outward sin (Prov. xiv. 4; Hos. xiv. 7).
12. Scoffing and infidelity (2 Pet. iii. 2).
13. Persecuting the righteous (Acts vii. 52).
14. An awful death (Prov. xvi. 32).
15. Final perdition (Matt. xxv. 41).

Reader, examine the Scriptures attached to every step in the ladder—ponder them well. And now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever.—Amen.

V. Its Causes.

[11438] Too many such professors as he would have proved are to be found, even in this noontide of the gospel abroad in the world, who being at their first entrance into profession not soundly humbled, nor laying a sure foundation, nor resolved upon a universal self-denial, nor weighing with due forecast what it will cost them, do afterward behave themselves thereafter upon any gainful occasion, or greater trial and temptation, or being put to it indeed, they are wont from time to time to discover their rottenness, open the mouths of the profane, and shame all. They are like unto reeds, which in a calm stand bolt upright, and seem stiff and strong, but let the tempest break in upon them, and they bend any way.—*R. Bolton.*

VI. Its Evil Consequences.

[11439] Effects of backsliding: Loss of character, comfort, usefulness, well-grounded hope of future happiness.—*C. Buck.*

[11440] Backsliding is a sin that soon brings its own punishment (Prov. xiv. 14; Jer. iv. 19). 1. The loss of all true enjoyment and peace of heart. The sweet sunshine of heaven is intercepted by the damp mists of cherished lust; prayer restrained, joy darkened, hope clouded (Psa. xxxii. 3, 4; xxxviii. 3). 2. The loss of usefulness; less power for good, less concern, less zeal, less influence; the light dimmed that once shone brightly; the salt without savour. The reproofs of backsliders are like headless arrows; yea, worse; not only blanks, but blots. How could David have reproved sin in his sons in his own time of sin?—*Bowes.*

[11441] To reinvigorate an old organ seems more difficult and hopeless than to develope a new; and the backslider's terrible lot is to have to retrace with enfeebled feet each step of the way along which he strayed; to make up inch by inch the leeway he has lost, carrying with him a dead weight of acquired reluctance, and scarce knowing whether to be stimulated or discouraged by the oppressive memory of the previous fall.—*H. Drummond.*

[11442] It is much easier to lose the way than to find it again. Sin is not only of a hardening but of a blinding nature. The traveller who wanders in the daylight finds it hard work returning in the gloom.—*Bowes.*

VII. Its Special Hurtfulness.

1 Believers' sins are conspicuous and bring special reproach upon the gospel.

[11443] Though the wicked dishonour Him by their flagitious lives, yet let not His own children dishonour Him. Sins in you are worse than in others. A fault in a stranger is not so much taken notice of as a fault in a child. A spot in a black cloth is not so much observed, but a spot in scarlet every one's eye is upon it. A sin in the wicked is not so much wondered at, it is a spot in black; but a sin in a child of God, here is a spot in scarlet; this is more visible, and brings an odium and dishonour upon the gospel.—*T. Watson.*

2 Deliberate sin is especially unbecoming and heinous in believers.

[11444] God is more impatient at a sin committed by His servants than at many by persons that are His enemies; and an uncivil answer from a son to a father, from an obliged person to a benefactor, is a greater indecency than if any enemy should storm his house or revile him to his head. Augustus Cæsar taxed all the world, and God took no public notices of it; but when David taxed and numbered a petty province, it was not to be expiated without a plague; because such persons, besides the direct sin, add the circumstance of ingratitude to God, who hath redeemed them from their vain conversation, and from death, and from hell, and consigned them to the inheritance of sons, and given them His grace and His Spirit, and many periods of comfort, and a certain hope, and visible earnests of immortality. Nothing is baser than that such a person, against his reason, against his interest, against his God,

against so many obligations, against his custom, against his very habits and acquired inclinations, should do an action "quam nisi seductis nequeas committere divis;" which a man must for ever be ashamed of, and, like Adam, must run from God Himself to do it, and depart from the state in which he had placed all his hopes, and to which he had designed all his labours. The consideration is effective enough, if we sum up the particulars; for he that hath lived well, and then falls into a deliberate sin, is infinitely dishonoured, is most imprudent, most unsafe, and most unthankful.—*Bp. Jeremy Taylor.*

VIII. Its Healing.

[11445] There is a fourfold healing of backsliding—1. The forgiveness of the sin; 2. The removal of the injurious effects which the sin has caused; 3. The taking away of the judgments God has sent; 4. The restoration of lost comfort.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

IX. Its Penalty.

1 It proceeds upon fixed principles.

[11446] The penalty of backsliding is not something unreal and vague, some unknown quantity which may be measured out to us disproportionately, or which perchance, since God is good, we may altogether evade. The consequences are already marked within the structure of the soul. So to speak, they are physiological. The thing affected by our indifference or by our indulgence is not the book of final judgment, but the present fabric of the soul. The punishment of degeneration is simply degeneration—the loss of functions, the decay of organs, the atrophy of the spiritual nature.—*H. Drummond.*

[11447] The soul of man is called the "temple of the Holy Ghost." As God pulled down His temple when it became "a den of thieves," so He forsaketh the temple of the soul, and taketh His grace from her (as from a divorced spouse) when she lusteth after other loves. With any talent He giveth this charge, "Use and increase it until I come;" being left, at last He cometh to see what we have done. The seed was sown, this year the Lord calls for fruit, but none will come; the next year, and the next after, but none comes; at last the curse goeth forth, "Never fruit grow upon thee more." Then as the fig-tree began to wither, so his gifts begin to pare as if a worm were still gnawing at them; his knowledge loseth his relish, like the Jews' manna; his judgment rusts like a sword which is not used; his zeal trembleth as though it were in a palsy; his faith withereth as though it were blasted; and the image of death is upon all his religion.

After this he thinketh, like Samson, to pray as he did, and speak as he did, and hath no power; but wondereth, like Zedekiah, how the Spirit is gone from him. Now, when the good Spirit is gone, then cometh the spirit of blindness, and the spirit of terror, and the spirit of fear, and all to seduce the spirit of man. After this, by little and little, first he falls into error—then he comes into heresy—at last he plungeth into despair; after this, if he inquire, God will not suffer him to learn; if he read, God will not suffer him to understand; if he hear, God will not suffer him to remember; if he pray, God seemeth unto him like Baal, who could not hear; at last he beholdeth his wretchedness, as Adam looked upon his nakedness, and mourneth for his gifts, as Rachel wept for her children, "because they were not." All this cometh to pass that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he seem ethto have."—*Henry Smith.*

9

DEPARTING FROM GOD.

I. Diagnosis of this Sin.

[11448] Our sin is charged upon us collectively in common: we have all gone astray. Distributively: every one to his own way. We all agree in turning aside from the right way of pleasing and enjoying of God; and we disagree, as each one hath a by-path of his own, some running after this lust, some after that, and so are not only divided from God, but divided from one another, while every one maketh his will his law.—*T. Manton, D.D.*

II. Its Ruinous Consequences.

[11449] Cain departed from God and seemed to get on well for a while. He built cities, sought out many inventions, his family prospered in the world: their whole life seemed to show how well man can get on without God. And the end of it was "the flood came," and "they were drowned."

[11450] Oh, if some young man, timidly beginning a course of departure from God, with as yet many restraints of conscience, of a godly education upon him, still dwelling within the charmed circle of a mother's prayers, not yet having quite escaped the influence and remembrances of a holy home, could realize himself to himself, as hereafter he shall be, how low he will fall, what swine's husks he will come to, could he picture to himself his future boldness in vice, his shamelessness in sinning, the day, not so far off, when he, now timidly sipping at the cup of a forbidden joy, shall drink up iniquity like water, and work all uncleanness with greediness, foaming out his own shame—could he thus picture his future self to himself, he would perhaps start back in horror and amazement: it may be that he would not venture on that step which shall be as the first term of so fatal a crisis.

[11451] If we are departing from God, the farther we go the darker will our path become, and more full of misery. He is "the Sun," on whom our backs are turned, and henceforth we walk in our own shadow; a shadow which, if we do not turn, will deepen into "the blackness of darkness for ever."

III. ENCOURAGEMENT TO THOSE WHO DESIRE TO RETURN TO THE RIGHT PATH.

[11452] We may find it impossible to retrace our steps when we have departed from God, but there is a friendly hand that can lead us from the wrong road into the right one. There is an attractive force, even the Father's love, which, if we will yield to it, will bring us back to our Father's arms.

10

FORGETTING GOD.

I. NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS SIN.

[11453] Those "who forget God" placed in the same class with the "hypocrite," or rather the "profane," or "wicked." Enough to characterize a man as wicked, that he "forgets God." (So Psa. ix. 17; l. 22.) To forget God is —(1) Not to *think* of Him; (2) Not to *thank* Him; (3) Not to *serve and obey* Him. It is to forget—(1) His presence; (2) His providence; (3) His precepts. Forgetfulness of another implies—(1) Want of love; (2) Want of respect. Men feel wounded on being forgotten by those whom they love, and on whose love they have a claim.—*T. Robinson.*

[11454] Every soul that loves anything more than God, or doth not love God more than all things, is a cursed idolater: thou worshippest a false instead of a true God. Dost thou, therefore, love riches more than God? It is the mammon of unrighteousness that is thy god. Is it pleasures thou lovest more than God? Then pleasures are thy god. Is it a husband or wife thou lovest more than God? Then it is thy husband or wife that is thy god. Is it thy children, thy liberty, thy health, thy credit, thy sins, thy life, that thou lovest more than the great God? These, these are thy gods, these are the deities thou worshippest!—*Bp. Beveridge.*

II. ITS GUILT.

1 It is the root and essence of all sin.

[11455] It is to ignore and, as far as we are able, to annihilate Him from His own universe. It is to treat Him as though there were no such Being. The fool hath said in his heart, "No God" (Psa. xiv. 1). To "remember" God equivalent to loving and serving Him (Eccles. xii. 1; Isa. lxiv. 5).—*T. Robinson.*

2 It is to forget Him who possesses all claims to our remembrance.

[11456] From what He is in *Himself;* (2) From what He is and has been *to us.* God is —(1) The Being who is the Source and Centre of all possible excellence and loveliness; (2) Our Creator and Father; (3) Our Preserver from moment to moment; (4) Our Provider; (5) Our Protector; (6) Our Deliverer from trouble and danger; (7) Our Benefactor and best Friend; (8) In Christ our Redeemer and Saviour from sin and all its direful consequences.—*Ibid.*

3 It is to give our thoughts and hearts to the world, which has no attraction but what it derives from Him.

[11457] Such is the character of all engrossing passion, such is the source of sin to which the soul gives way, in avarice, ambition, worldliness, sensual sin, godless science. The soul at last does not rebel against God; it *forgets* Him. It is taken up with other things, with itself, with the subject of its thoughts, the objects of its affections, and it has no time for God, because it has no love for Him.—*Dr. Pusey.*

[11458] No man can be without his god. If he have not the true God to bless and sustain him, he will have some false god to delude and to betray him. The Psalmist knew this, and therefore he joined so closely forgetting the name of our God and holding up our hands to some strange god. For every man has something in which he hopes, on which he leans, to which he retreats and retires, with which he fills up his thoughts in empty spaces of time; when he is alone, when he lies sleepless on his bed, when he is not pressed with other thoughts; to which he betakes himself in sorrow or trouble, as that from which he shall draw comfort and strength—his fortress, his citadel, his defence; and has not this good right to be called his god? Man was made to lean on the Creator; but if not on Him, then he leans on the creature in one shape or another. The ivy cannot grow alone; it must twine round some support or other; if not the goodly oak, then the ragged thorn; round any dead stick whatever, rather than have no stay nor support at all. It is even so with the heart and affections of man; if they do not twine around God, they must twine around some meaner thing.—*Abp. Trench.*

[11459] To how many thousand objects is the mind of man indifferent; can turn itself to this or that; run with facility all points of the compass, among the whole universe of beings; but essay only to draw it to God, and it recoils; thoughts and affections revolt, and decline all converse with that blessed object! Toward other objects it freely opens and dilates itself, as under the benign beams of a warm sun; there are placid, complacential emotions; amic-

able, sprightly converses, and embraces. Towards God only it is presently contracted and shut up; life retires, and it becomes as a stone, cold, rigid, and impenetrable.—*S. Howe.*

4 It is ingratitude, robbery, and idolatry.

[11460] It is to rob Him of His honour as well as ourselves of peace. On the other hand, to remember God is to elevate, ennoble, and purify ourselves.—*T. Robinson.*

11

FORSAKING GOD.

I. The Folly and Misery of this Forsaking.

[11461] He who forsakes God for a greater liberty is like a babe lost from its mother. They who refrain from God for the sake of pleasure are like men running from the free air to seek sunlight amid shadows and in dungeons. They who withdraw from God that they may have wider circuits of personal power are like birds that forsake the forests and fly within the fowler's cage to find a larger bound and wider liberty.—*Beecher.*

[11462] Though the heart once gone from God turns continually farther away from Him, and moves not towards Him till it be renewed, yet, even in that wandering, it retains that natural relation to God, as its centre, that it hath no true rest elsewhere, nor can by any means find it.—*Coleridge.*

[11463] When the soul leaves God once, and looks downward, what is there to stay it from disquiet? Remove the needle from the pole-star, and it is always stirring and trembling, never quiet till it be right again. So the soul when it forsakes God can never be at rest.

II. The Absurdity of the Plea for such Conduct on Account of its Commonness.

[11464] That no sin is the less odious to God, nor less dangerous to ourselves, because it is common; should all children in the house, or all the servants in the family conspire in one against their master or father, would it not aggravate the offence and make it blacker? So is it in this case; of such a conspiracy God complains (Jer. xi. 9) that was found amongst the men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. "The children gathered wood, and the fathers kindled the fire, and the women kneaded their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven" (Jer. vii. 18). This was a sin so much the more provoking (as the Lord there speaks) by how much the more odious. In the like manner also doth God aggravate their sins elsewhere, as Ezekiel xxii. 6, 11, and Daniel in his confessions of the sins of his people (Dan. ix. 11). In that "all Israel had transgressed and turned back, and not hearkened to His voice." As for the danger, it is never a whit the less: for albeit with men many times it is a means of immunity from punishment that they have many who join with them in wickedness, yet with God it is not. Prov. xi. 21: "Though hand join in hand, yet the wicked shall not escape." Company cannot shroud us from His wrath, nor keep off His strokes. Yea, it is so far from that as that indeed, first, it hasteneth God's vengeance upon sinners here in this life, and nothing more. For as the generality of repentance and joining together in the possession of the same is of great force to stay God's wrath, as in these two famous examples (Judg. xx. 26; Jonah iii. 5) appears, so is the generality of sin of great force to hasten and increase judgments.

12

ASHAMED OF CHRIST.

I. Phases of this Sin.

[11465] The man of business wishes to set his face against customs which are common in the line of business in which he is engaged, but which he feels are not right in the sight of God; but he is ashamed to say boldly that he is bent upon making God's will his law. The man of rank and station holds opinions which he finds written in the book of God. He is ashamed to avow them, because he knows that he will be called narrow-minded, bigoted, old-fashioned; he fears that well-bred expression of surprise that one so well educated, so enlightened, so accustomed to good society as he is, should hold to such prejudices of a bygone age. Or he desires to do something which he believes to be right, though it may involve a certain degree of harshness and unpleasantness to the feelings of others; he dares not, because he knows it will be regarded as imprudent, as wrong-headed, as inconsiderate, as bordering on a neglect of that courtesy to others which the laws of society demand. Are not such men ashamed of Christ and of His words? Are they not in danger of finding Him ashamed of them, when He comes in His glory at the end of the world?—*J. J. Lias.*

II. Its Causes.

1 A false etiquette.

[11466] Why should we be ashamed of the language of Canaan in our common talk? Why should not the good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bring forth sweet and savoury speech, even then when he communeth of common and ordinary matters? Doth not every one, of what nation soever he is, Dutch, French, or English, by his dialect bewray his country, always alike, whatsoever the subject of

his speech be? Why then should not we as well approve the celestial Canaan to be our country by the spiritual propriety of speech which that country hath? They then that are ashamed of this language in their communication, of this style in their writing, show plainly that they are not citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem.—*D. Dyke*, 1618.

[11467] "A person of great quality," saith Fuller, "was pleased to lodge one night in my house; I durst not invite him to my family prayer, and therefore for that time omitted it, thereby making a breach in a good custom, and giving Satan advantage to assault it: yea, the loosening of such a link might have endangered the scattering of the chain. Bold bashfulness, which durst offend God whilst it did fear man; especially considering that, though my guest was never so high, yet by the laws of hospitality I was above him whilst he was under my roof. Hereafter, whosoever cometh within the doors shall be requested to come within the discipline of my house, if, accepting the homely diet, he will not refuse my home devotion; and, sitting at my table, will be entreated to kneel down by it." Bravely resolved!—*N. Rogers*, 1658.

2 **A false diffidence on account of our own very failings.**

[11468] Sometimes our own very failings make us ashamed of confessing Christ. We know that we fail in temper, or we fail in truthfulness, or we fail in reverence, or we fail in steadiness and thoughtfulness every day, and that such failures bring discredit on our profession of Christianity. Do not, however, let this cause lead you to be ashamed of Christ. Blame yourself for your inconsistency before God, most certainly. Tell Him the sorrow and the shame you feel for causing the enemies of God to blaspheme, but never for one moment to let your sins cause you to let go your Christian profession. Such conduct is like letting go the anchor because your ship has lost one of her spars. It is like giving up business because you have had one or two bad debts. It is like refusing to learn a trade because you make a few mistakes at the beginning. And if you see such conduct to be foolish and mad in the affairs of time, how much more must it needs be in the affairs of eternity! No, never be ashamed of Christ's words, even though your own inconsistencies be employed to make you so. For if for any cause you are ashamed, Christ will surely be ashamed of you when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.—*J. J. Lias.*

III. Arguments against this Sin.

1 **It is in itself infinitely unworthy.**

[11469] Who are ashamed of Christ? Any in heaven? No; angels, archangels, saints, glory in Him. Any in hell? No; many there ashamed of having been ashamed of Him. On earth? Yes; strange to say. But who on earth? Not the best parents, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters; not the greatest sages, or the sweetest poets, or the truest patriots and philanthropists. Only those who ought to blush for shame themselves.—*Dr. Thomas.*

[11470] What though haughtiness should look down in disdain? What though mockery should open its lips and grin? Shall a man deny his nearest and dearest friend to avoid reproach or insult? Shall a man be ashamed of Him who is peerless in goodness and glory?—*Morison.*

2 **The opposite course appeals to every noble instinct in our nature.**

[11471] Nelson at Trafalgar would insist on taking his place in the fight arrayed in his proper uniform, and all the world admires his heroism; let us adopt no disguises, but in honour and dishonour, in safety and in danger, boldly stand forth loyal to our glorious Master. —*W. L. Watkinson.*

3 **It is a chief hindrance to the cause of Christ.**

[11472] This is a temptation to which young disciples are specially liable. It has been common to them in all ages of the Church, and is still very powerful even in this Christian land. The fear of shame in connection with Christ, also is one of the strongest motives that keep men back from Him and His service. He Himself anticipated this, and more than once gave warnings and encouragements to His disciples on the subject (see Mark viii. 38; Matt. x. 33; Luke ix. 26, xii. 9).

IV. Homiletical Hints.

[11473] How a professor of the gospel may now be ashamed of his Master—(1) In heart; (2) In word; (3) In deed.—*Lange.*

[11474] The Christian (1) need not be ashamed of his Lord; (2) must not; (3) will not if he be a Christian indeed.—*Ibid.*

13

DENIAL OF CHRIST.

I. Its Forms.

[11475] We may deny Christ in our actions and practice: and these speak much louder than our tongues. To have an orthodox belief and a true profession, concurring with a bad life, is only to deny Christ with a greater solemnity. Belief and profession will speak thee a Christian but very faintly when thy conversation proclaims thee an infidel. Many, while they have preached Christ in their sermons, have read a lecture of atheism in their practice.—*R. Lough, D.D.*, 1613–1716.

II. Its Causes.

[11476] I wonder not that many professors disown the Lord Jesus, when they were ignorant why they at any time owned Him. He that takes up religion on trust will lay it down when it brings him into trouble. He that followeth Christ, he knoweth not why, will forsake Him, he knoweth not how.—*Swinnock.*

III. Its Guilt and Inexcusableness under any Circumstances.

[11477] If our love to Christ is the passion it ought to be, we shall say, with all Peter's sincerity, but without his self-confidence, "Though all men should deny Thee, yet will I never deny Thee. Nay, the more they deny Thee, the more will I confess Thee."—*Clemance.*

IV. Lessons taught by St. Peter's Denial.

[11478] *Peter's denial* (Luke xxii. 61, 62). A grievous sin. The disciple disowned his Master, and the servant his Lord. I. Its elements. (1) Falsehood; (2) Cowardice; (3) Profanity; (4) Persistence. II. Its aggravations. (1) His close connection with Christ; (2) The repeated warnings; (3) Strong professions of devotion; (4) The strong demands of the time and place. III. Its mitigations. (1) Sudden; (2) Brief; (3) Never repeated. IV. Its chief causes. (1) Self-confidence; (2) Blindness to near danger; (3) Negligence of precautions; (4) Fear of derision.—*M. Braithwaite.*

14

FEAR OF MAN.

I. Its Various Forms.

[11479] This evil does not always take the same form. (1) At one time it shows itself in repressing known truth in the presence of friends through a dread of being deemed impolite; (2) At another time in subscribing to an object of which the judgment does not approve through fear of losing a customer; (3) Or perhaps it is the fear of being a marked man.

II. Its Scripture Examples.

[11480] *Examples.*—Abraham (Gen. xii. 12, xx. 11); Isaac (Gen. xxvi. 7); Saul (1 Sam. xv. 24); David (1 Sam. xxi. 10–13, xxvii. 1–3); Elijah (1 Kings xix. 3); Nicodemus (John iii. 1); Peter (Matt. xxvi. 69–75; Gal. ii. 12); Blind man's parents (John ix. 22).

III. Its Folly.

[11481] What would the nightingale care if the toad despised her singing? She would leave the cold toad to his dark shadows. And what care I for the sneers of men who grovel upon earth? I will still sing on in the ear and bosom of God.—*Beecher.*

IV. Its Disastrous Consequences.

[11482] Learn from your earliest years to inure your principles against the perils of ridicule. You can no more exercise your reason if you are in constant dread of laughter than you can enjoy your life if you are in constant dread of death.—*Sydney Smith.*

[11483] "The fear of man bringeth a snare." Jeremiah was well-nigh holding his tongue through fear of man, but God warned him against it. Jonah fared ill through shrinking from Nineveh. And so will all who let the fear of man sway them instead of the word of God.—*Clemance.*

V. Its Remedy.

[11484] The best remedy against the fear of man is the fear of God. Cultivate a sense of His presence and majesty, and you will not fear what man can do unto you.

[11485] It is only the fear of God that can deliver us from the fear of man.—*Witherspoon.*

15

FEAR OF DEATH.

I. Instances of the Fear of Death.

[11486] *Mirabeau.*—"Crown me with flowers, intoxicate me with perfume, let me die with the sound of delicious music." When death came nearer, he said, "My sufferings are intolerable: I have within me a hundred years of life, but not a moment's courage." He demanded and received a draught of opium, under the influence of which he died.

Francis Newport.—"Oh the insufferable pangs of hell and damnation!"

Hobbes.—"I shall be glad to find a hole to creep out of the world at." He had previously said that, were he the master of the world, he would give it all to live one day longer.

II. The Nature of the Fear of Death.

1 It is universal.

[11487] The image of that forbidding figure sets forth too truly the terrible influence which death exerts among us. He casts a heavy shadow over our life. The creeping shadow never ceases to fall upon the world. And, in addition, is the certain anticipation of death, and the well-known signs of its approach; so that St. Paul's description of men is justified, as those "who, through fear of death, are all their lifetime subject unto bondage."—*T. M. Herbert.*

2 It is terrible.

[11488] The fear of death—is not this the most terrible fear that haunts men? Is not this the fear which gives its edge and its bitterness to all other fear? What is the fear of sickness, poverty, sorrow, old age? Are not all these only forms of the fear of death? They would be scarcely felt but for the fear of death beyond. It is an awful thing to die. Above all, it is an awful thing if we know not whither we are going or whether we are going into a state of anguish and of suffering of which we hardly dare to think.—*Perowne.*

[11489] Man's natural fear of death and his shrinking from it is best described in Shakespeare's lines:

"Death is a fearful thing.
To die, and go we know not where.
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
Of those that lawless and incertain thoughts
Imagine howling! 'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death."

3 It is natural to the unrenewed.

[11490] At the end of the longest and greenest avenue of life they see the grim phantom waiting to embrace them in his skeleton arms. Nay, if they look behind, it is still death that is pursuing them with poised dart, like a foe most fell in malice, resistless in attack, and sure to overtake them. What wonder that they are so "horribly afraid!"—*J. G. Horton.*

III. Motives to overcome its Influences.

[11491] 1. Christ has abolished death (2 Tim. i. 10) and broken its terrible power.

2. Death touches the body only; it breaks the shell and emancipates the spirit.

3. Death is the end of life's trials; "the funeral of all our sorrows."

4. Death is the dark passage to a bright and glorious future. It is the believer's "gain."

5. "Death is a time for the special ministry of angels" (Luke xvi. 20).

6. Death, however trying, will be followed by a glorious resurrection for the just.

7. In death the Lord Jesus has promised to be with His people.

8. He who has been with us in life's long day will not forsake us in death's short night.—*G. S. Bowes.*

[11492] Are we inclined to fear where no fear is? Let us bring our minds up close to the object, in order to convince ourselves that there is no ground for such terrible apprehensions. Ignorance is in this respect like darkness; it breeds unreasonable fears and surmises; every shadow becomes a frightful spectre; and we startle at the first appearance of that which, when we come to examine, has nothing in it dreadful. This method would sometimes be of use to qualify the fear of death itself; I mean to him who has no just reason to fear dying, having made his peace with God, and secured his interest in the promises of that Jesus who has conquered death and hell.

[11493] No man who is fit to live need fear to die. Poor, timorous, faithless souls that we are! How we shall smile at our vain alarms when the worst has happened! To us here, death is the most terrible thing we know. But when we have tasted its reality, it will mean to us birth, deliverance, a new creation of ourselves. It will be what health is to the sick man. It will be what home is to the exile. It will be what the loved one given back is to the bereaved. As we draw near to it, a solemn gladness should fill our hearts. It is God's great morning lighting up the sky. Our fears are the terror of children in the night. The night with its terrors, its darkness, its feverish dreams, is passing away; and when we awake, it will be into the sunlight of God.—*George S. Merriam.*

[11494] That net (of death) cannot be evaded; but it may be changed, so that you would not fear its approach. When we become new creatures in Christ, death approaching us becomes a new creature too, as the image in a mirror changes with the object that stands before it. This dreaded net becomes like a warm, soft, encircling arm, pressing a frightened infant closer to a mother's breast.—*Arnot.*

IV. Contrast between the Presence of this Fear apart from Christ, and its Absence when united to Christ.

[11495] No wonder that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of men as being all their lifetime subject to bondage, slaves, through fear of death. But when that thought presents itself, it is like a ghastly spectre; it fills them with shuddering: the roses fall from the head, and the laughter is silent on their lips. There is no fear for them who are one with Christ. He, in passing through death, has destroyed him who had the power of death—that is, the devil—and has for ever set us free.

16

DEJECTION, SPIRITUAL

(*Including Despondency, Depression*).

I. Its Causes.

[11496] Persons come to the ministers of God in seasons of despondency; they pervert with marvellous ingenuity all the consolation which is given them: turning wholesome food into poison. The cause of their dejection is often physical. There are many spiritual cases which are cases for the physician rather than the divine.—*J. W. Robertson.*

[11497] At times we are at a loss to account for our despondency, and seek in vain for the causes of it in our present or adjacent circumstances; the difficulty consists in our not looking far enough; the explanation for it lies not in a part, but in the whole and in the totality of our lives.—*T. Davies.*

II. Its Sinfulness.

[11498] Despondency is not a state of humility; on the contrary, it is vexation and despair of a cowardly pride; whether we stumble or whether we fall, we must only think of rising again and going on in our course.—*Fénelon.*

[11499] Life is a warfare; and he who easily desponds deserts a double duty; he betrays the noblest property of man, which is dauntless resolution; and he rejects the providence of an All-gracious Being who guides and rules the universe.—*Jane Porter.*

III. Its Misery.

[11500] Despondency is the spirit of bitterness and darkness; it is a disease that stunts the faculties, enervates the heart, chills the affections, and dries up every channel of life; it leads to a purgatory of grief, and often ends in a miserable death.—*Ellis.*

IV. Its Treatment.

1 **Complainers require to be sharply reproved.**

[11501] We must say unto heartless complainers as God did to Joshua, "Get you up; why lie you thus upon your faces?" Do you think to mend your condition by wishing it better, or complaining it is so bad? Are your complaints of a want of interest in forgiveness a sanctified means to obtain it? Not at all; you will not deal so with yourselves in things natural or civil. In such things you will take an industrious course for a remedy or for relief. In things of the smallest importance in this world and unto this life, you will not content yourselves with wishing and complaining, as though industry in the use of natural means, for the attaining of natural ends, were the ordinance of God, and diligence in the use of spiritual means, for the obtaining of spiritual ends, were not.—*J. Cowen, D.D.*, 1616–1683.

V. Homiletical Hints.

[11502] *Its causes are*—1. Burden of sin. 2. Wickedness of world. 3. Misfortunes. 4. Bereavements. II. The *cure*. 1. A present trust in God. 2. Looking to future.—*W. W. Whythe.*

[11503] Its causes are—1. Bodily disease. 2. Apparent declension in religion. 3. Recurrence of vain thoughts. 4. Consciousness of some sin. 5. Dread of exclusion from presence of God. 6. Pressure of adversity.—*G. Brooks.*

[11504] Causes of Elijah's depression (1 Kings xix. 4–18). 1. Relaxation of physical strength—faint, hungry, travel-worn. 2. Want of sympathy—"I, even I only am left." 3. Want of occupation. 4. Disappointment in the expectation of success.—*F. W. Robertson.*

[11505] All men, even the greatest, liable to it. I. Caused by—1. Exhaustion. 2. Disappointment. 3. Failure. 4. Foreboding. 5. Sin. II. Must be struggled against—"Get thee up." 1. It is useless. 2. Hurtful. 3. Hinders work which is waiting to be done.

[11506] Religious depression (1 Kings xix. 4–18). I. Following great public excitement. 1. It was a natural reaction. 2. A needful discipline. II. Producing the feeling of utter loneliness. III. Causing mistaken views of life. 1. Thought life-work had been a failure. 2. That race of godly seers was extinct. IV. Divinely removed by fitting means. By (1) nature; (2) new occupation; (3) fresh companionship; (4) unveiling of forgotten facts.—*U. R. Thomas.*

17

DOUBTS.

I. Doubt and Unbelief.

[11507] Doubt is as bad as unbelief; for a fog is as bad as midnight darkness.

II. Legitimate Doubt.

[11508] It is very possible for doubt, and sceptical doubt, to be merely intellectual, the scrutiny of a mind which, whilst on general grounds it holds immovably fast to faith and revelation, is yet resolved to examine truth on every side and to its very foundations, and is especially resolved to understand the difficulties of the honest doubter. Thus to entertain doubt, thus to search and weigh all that can be fairly said on behalf of unbelief, can be the vocation of but few, and demands the deepest reverence and humility of

heart on the part of the inquirer : but the man who is called and qualified to accomplish this work, although he is a profound doubter, is so far from being an unbeliever, that of all men he possesses the deepest, firmest, and noblest faith. And such men must be reckoned among the most devoted friends of truth, and the most gifted and honoured servants of the God of truth. Others, doubtless, there are of whose heart doubt gets hold against their will.—*J. H. Rigg.*

III. The Different Kinds of Doubt.

[11509] Doubts are of two kinds, as they regard (1) doctrinal truth ; (2) personal experience.

[11510] A very large portion of the Christian's doubts are not doubts ; they are wonts. The will is not subdued to God. It has not completely surrendered itself to the best it knows, and to the dictates of the spirit of the Lord and the promptings of the conscience. Often when the man stands doubting, as he supposes he is, the struggle really is between the conscience and the will. That trouble lies at the root of the whole matter. He knows what is right, but hesitates to do the right. To be sure there is doubting, lack of faith in God, but because the will is not completely given up to the good. Religion is not down alone, or primary, in the emotions. It is down in the will, and there solves the problem for the man. When the prodigal said, "I will arise and go to my father," the question was settled. God worketh in us to *will* and to *do*. Let us be workers together with Him in willing and in doing.

IV. Their Causes.

[11511] 1. Physical : whether of bodily disease or mental constitution and temperament. 2. Moral : acts of sin, which darken the mind and hinder communion with God ; the consciousness of shortcoming and deficiencies. 3. Spiritual : the hidings of God's face in sovereign wisdom and inscrutable goodness. Partial or imperfect views of revealed truth, as concerning God's decrees and purposes of election. God's dealings in providence and grace, the person and work of the Lord Jesus, and the sinner's warrant to believe in Him ; unbelief, listening to evil counsellors, and mixing in unsanctified controversy.—*G. S. Bowes.*

V. Their Evil Consequences.

1 They rob us of much comfort.

[11512] 1. He sometimes questions whether he be in the state of grace or no ; and thus he thinks with himself : "Perhaps I believe, perhaps I do not believe : I have something that glisters, perhaps it is but a counterfeit chain of pearl ; my faith is presumption, my love to Christ is but self-love." And when the Spirit of God hath wrought the heart to some sound persuasion, he is soon shaken again, as a ship that lies at anchor, though it be safe, yet it is shaken and tossed upon the water ; and these fears leave impressions of sadness upon the heart.—*T. Watson.*

[11513] Hume, after witnessing in the family of the venerable La Roche those consolations which only the gospel can impart, confessed, with a sigh, that "there were moments when, amid all the pleasures of philosophical discovery, and the pride of literary fame, he wished that he had never doubted."—*Foster.*

2 They rob us of much good.

[11514] We sacrifice too much at the present day to prudence, and the fear of incurring the reproach of enthusiasm ; we stifle the holiest impulses of the understanding and the heart. Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win by fearing to attempt.—*Southey.*

VI. Their Treatment.

1 Face your difficulties.

[11515] Be not timid towards them. Some men deal with religious doubt as some men deal with bodily disease : they dare not ascertain it : they had rather let it gather strength by delay than submit it to that treatment which if taken in time will certainly heal. Be not ye thus unwise. Bring your mind to account. Take the measure of your difficulties. As you examine them some will disappear. Register the rest. Put them by. Three months hence, when you look at them again, they will be fewer. But, whatever you do, let them not gather strength by your timidity. Give them not the added importance of mystery. Force them to a reckoning. See how large they are, or how small. Make them produce their witnesses. And then listen to counter-evidence. If there are some objections to belief, are there none to unbelief? In particular, I would urge you to a decision with reference to the great question of all. Minor matters can wait.—*Dean Vaughan.*

[11516] No candid man ever found himself so beset by unbelief that he could not discern present duty. God never leaves the honest soul in doubt as to the next step he is to take. Or if he lifts his foot in uncertainty but in faith, he may be sure that he will see where to put it down.

2 Do not let your difficulties shake your hold of God and of conscience.

[11517] Collier says we must let go manifest truths because we cannot answer all questions about them. "However far our doubts may go, they cannot root up from within us, without our own consent, the power which claims to guide our lives with supreme authority. They cannot obliterate from within us the sense of right and wrong, and of the everlasting difference between them. They cannot silence, unless we join in

silencing, the voice that bids us believe, that in spite of all that can be said, or seen, or felt, the law of right is the eternal foundation on which all things are built. By this a man may yet live if he have nothing else to live by, and God will assuredly give him more in His own good time." —*Norton.*

3 Do not treat all species of doubts as if they were sins, but as perplexities.

[11518] As we must not quit our hold on God, so do not let us fancy that God has quitted His hold on us. To fancy that every doubt is of itself a sin is altogether to mistake God's love and mercy. Rather let us endeavour to see why such doubts are sent. Doubts are, in many cases, the birth pangs of clearer light. They are the means by which we grow in knowledge, even in knowledge of heavenly things. Better far, no doubt, to grow in knowledge by quiet, steady increase of light, without these intervals of darkness and difficulty. But that is not granted to all. Many men, perhaps most men, have to grow by often doubting and by having their doubts cleared up. In that way only is the chaff separated from the grain, and the pure truth at last presented to their minds. In that way are prejudices, false notions, frivolities shaken off from the substantial truth, and they are blessed with the fulness of the knowledge of God. These doubts are often the fiery wind which burns up our wood, hay, or stubble which we may have erected in our souls, and leaves space for us to build gold, silver, precious stones. They are in fact as much the messengers of God's providence as any other voices that reach us. They may distress us, but they cannot destroy us, for we are in the hands of God. They may hide God's face from us, but they cannot stay the flow of His love; for He is our Father, and Christ hath redeemed us.—*Ibid.*

[11519] When the ship shakes, do not cast yourself into the sea. When storms assault spiritual truth, do not abandon yourself to the wild evil of the world that cannot rest. The ship rolls in the wind, but by the wind advances. —*Lynch.*

4 Do not nurse your doubts.

[11520] Some men nurse their doubts: some speak as if it were a sign of intellect, or a proof of candour, or else an interesting weakness, to be doubters all their days: and even of those who do not err in this direction, yet many, once again, use no decision with themselves, listen to no counsel and will adopt no regimen, for the removal or satisfaction of doubt, and thus show an ungoverned and a wayward spirit, much opposite to that which breathed in the first disciples and which still dwells in those who shall be heirs of salvation.—*Dean Vaughan.*

5 Do not force yourself to believe but learn to trust God.

[11521] He does not require you to say that you believe what you do not believe; for that would be dishonest. He does not require you to force yourself to believe by an act of your will; for that would be only self-deception, and nothing could justify that. You are not called on to believe till you are fully able to do so; but you are called on to trust. To trust is in your power. To resign yourself lovingly to God in the full confidence that His love will do all that you need, and that out of darkness He will be sure to bring light; to walk to the utmost of your power by the light that you already have; to hold fast by God's hand, and to trust the promises that He whispers in your conscience; that you can do, and that you ought to do.—*Norton.*

18

DELAY IN RELIGION.

I. Its Stages.

[11522] There are three stages at which a man may halt. First, he may defer the time of sitting down to examine; secondly, after he has commenced the examination he may hesitate in coming to a conclusion; and thirdly, although he have determined what he should do, he may delay the performance.—*Rev. W. A. Anderson.*

II. Its Causes.

[11523] 1. Unbelief; want of a due sense of the importance of spiritual things. 2. False security; "no danger yet;" presumption (Amos vi. 3). Things at a distance seldom move us. 3. Averseness of heart; enmity to all serious things; dread of the sorrows of repentance, the restraints of self-denial, the reproach of the world, the loss of gain. 4. The love of the world, and present delights and contents.—*G. S. Bowes.*

[11524] A deliberate purpose to repent in the future is a deliberate purpose to sin in the present.—*British Messenger*, 1864.

[11525] Augustine relates of himself, that before his conversion, he used to pray against his sins, and feel afraid lest God should hear his prayers, and take him at his word. At other times, his "inward thought" was, "Lord, hear me, *but not yet.*"

[11526] To-morrow, morrow, only not to-day! Thus idle people ever say, To-morrow! to-day I shall rest! to-morrow learn that lesson, to-morrow forsake that sin, to-morrow do this and that.

III. Mistake and Folly of this Sin viewed Generally.

1 It is not the method in which prudent men act in the affairs of every-day life.

[11527] It is not after the storm has arisen, or the telegraph has reported that the ship has struck, that the merchant runs to insure his goods. He effects the insurance while the sun is shining and the air calm ; he effects it before the ship has left the port. "Go and do likewise, living but dying men!"—*Spurgeon.*

[11528] Men do not argue thus in other cases ; they do not say, It is too soon to be rich ; they will not put off getting the world till old age ; no, here they take the first opportunity : is it not too soon to be rich, and is it too soon to be good? is not repentance a matter of the greatest consequence? is it not more needful for men to lament their sin than augment their estate?

2 The folly of delay in religion is evinced on the principle that deferred amendment increases the difficulty of this duty.

[11529] A bone that is out of joint is easier set at first than if you let it go longer. A disease taken in time is sooner cured than if it be let alone till it come to a paroxysm. You may easily wade over the waters when they are low ; if you stay till they are risen, they will be beyond your depth. Oh, sinner, the more treasons thou committest, the more dost thou incense heaven against thee, and the harder will it be to get thy pardon ; the longer thou spinnest out the time of thy sinning, the more work thou makest for repentance.

[11530] In midnight study, seek, ye young and old, a specific object for your mind and supply for your miserable old age. "It shall be done to-morrow." "To-morrow, thou wilt make the same answer." "What, dost thou look upon one day as such a precious gift?" "But when that other day has dawned, we have already spent yesterday's to-morrow. For see, another to-morrow wears away our years, and will always be a little beyond thee. For though it is so near thee, and guided by the self-same pole, thou wilt in vain try to overtake the felloe that revolves before thee, since thou art the hinder wheel, and on the second axle."

So Shakespeare ("Macbeth," act v. sc. 5) says :

> "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last syllable of recorded time ;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death."

Wherefore not to-day? to-morrow thou canst attend to something else ; every day has its allotted duty. Whatever has happened has happened — this only can I know ; but what may hap to-morrow I know not.

Every day if it vainly flies is in the volume of my life a page unwritten—blank and void. Well then, to-morrow, as well as to-day, place therein on every side a deed to be read by coming ages.

[11531] If one after a great rain cannot go over a running brook at noon, when the waters are low, will it not be much harder to get over that brook at night, when all the streams are come to one course or current? So will it not be harder (thinkest thou) to repent after the committing of a hundred sins than ten? Are not sparks sooner quenched than flames? and green wounds sooner healed than festered sores? Is not the nail that is driven in with the hammer into a piece of timber fastened with many blows? At the first driving of it we strike but easily, but afterwards we redouble our strength, and with often striking drive it so home that it cannot be gotten out till the timber comes to be consumed in the fire. Many the like similitude are used to good purpose by divines, to give you to understand the danger of delaying to bring forth good fruit to God till old age.—*N. Rogers.*

[11532] Not only every downward step taken but every upward step delayed is a beginning of the blinding of our eyes and the hardening of our hearts. Murmur against the justice of this process and its operation becomes the surer and more speedy.—*Dr. Arnold.*

3 The folly of delay in religion is evinced upon the fact of the uncertainty of life.

[11533] How doth the procrastinating sinner know that he shall live to be old? "What is your life? it is but a vapour" (James iv. 14). How soon may sickness arrest thee, and death strike off thy head? may not thy sun set at noon? Oh, then, what imprudence is it to put off mourning for sin, and to make a long work, when death is about to make a short work! Cæsar, deferring to read the letter sent him, was stabbed in the Senate House.

[11534] Rabbi Eliezer used to say to those around him, "Repent one day before your death." His disciples used to ask him, "But how can any man know on what day he will die?" "The more need he repent to-day, lest he should die to-morrow," was the reply. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice harden not your hearts."

4 The folly of delay in religion is evinced by the improbability of finding mercy in such a case.

[11535] 'Tis folly to put off all till last in respect of the improbability of finding mercy ; though God give thee space to repent, He may deny thee grace to repent.

[11536] God has promised forgiveness to your repentance ; but He has not promised to-morrow to your procrastination.—*St. Augustine.*

[11537] When God calls for mourning and thou art deaf, when thou callest for mercy God may be dumb (Prov. i. 24, 28). Think of it seriously, God may take the latter time to judge thee in, because thou didst not take the former time to repent in. To respite our solemn turning to God till old age or sickness is high imprudence, because these late acts of devotion are for the most part dissembled.

[11538] If a man neglects himself for a few years he will change into a worse and a lower man. If it is his body that he neglects, he will deteriorate into a wild savage; if it is his mind, it will deteriorate into imbecility and madness; if he neglects his conscience, it will run off into lawlessness and vice.

We have looked round the wards of an hospital, a prison, or a madhouse, and seen there Nature at work squaring her accounts with sin. And we knew, as we looked, that there is a judgment when inexorable Nature is crying aloud for justice and carrying out her heavy sentences for violated laws.—*Prof. H. Drummond.*

[11539] It is not one in ten thousand that deliberately makes up his mind to reject Christ; the vast majority fully intend to embrace the gospel in good time, but they put it off until it is too late. Oh, listen to the loving voice which says in tender, earnest tones to thee, "Wilt thou not from this time say unto Me, 'My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth?'"—*Dr. J. Smith.*

[11540] Of 253 converts to Christ who came under my own observation at a particular period, 138 were converted under 20 years of age; 85 between 20 and 30; 22 between 30 and 40; 4 between 40 and 50; 3 between 50 and 60; and 1 between 60 and 70.—*Dr. Spencer.*

IV. Mistake and Guilt of Special Forms of this Sin.

1 Of deferring to earnestly examine spiritual concerns.

(1) *Such indecision is a very ignominious state of mind and character.*

[11541] To wander about in a state of ignorance, doubt, and uncertainty, saying you don't know what to think, especially when the matter is one of great importance, and to have it reported of you that you are a person of no fixed principle, that you have not made up your mind, and that you are living at random, without a hope or aim, is a condition than which no other can be more contemptible, no other more disgraceful for its imbecility of mind.—*Rev. W. Anderson.*

(2) *Such indecision is a very painful state of mind, even intellectually considered.*

[11542] Next to the affliction of an evil conscience is that to an undetermined state of opinion, wherever the individual is possessed of a respectable amount of intelligence. Knowledge is the food of the soul, and so long as a man is bewildered and perplexed on a subject of vital interest, even although his conscience be not concerned, he must experience great uneasiness. But when to the inquietude of intellectual uncertainty there is added the disturbance of a dissatisfied conscience, how restless a man the two evils make of him!—*Ibid.*

(3) *Such indecision cannot be without frequent compunctions and visitations of conscience.*

[11543] Shall a man be satisfied with himself, shall he be at ease, shall he cease upbraiding himself so long as he defers the settlement of that momentous point, whether there be a God whom he should reverence and serve? By his own supposition it may be true; and if it is, then is not every day of procrastination a day of denying God His lawful homage and service? Unhappy boy! unhappy man! wretched maiden! miserable mother! that by your own supposition it may turn out that you are living in a state of defiance of an Almighty God! Are you not a wonder and mystery of folly—yea, of madness—to yourself that you can permit this question to remain undetermined for an hour?—*Ibid.*

2 Of hesitating to close with the offers of salvation because of doubts and difficulties.

(1) *It is not necessary that a man should defer the time of being serious, and thoughtful, and devout, and pure, and righteous in his conduct, till he has gained a settled opinion on all disputed points.*

[11544] There are many subjects on which no dispute exists among men who are entitled to the character of believers in revelation. There is the immortality of the soul. Who makes any dispute about the duty of preparing for eternity by prayer and an observance of the duties of the moral law? Well, decide that length, and wait for more light.—*Ibid.*

[11545] Disputes are carried on warmly on the question of the proper mode of church government—the mode and subjects of baptism, the nature of the Divine decrees, the nature of the millennial kingdom, &c.; but what does it signify, although you have not yet decided with whom the truth lies in the case of such disputations as these? Have you decided this—that Christ made an atonement for sin by His death? Then why halt about giving thy heart and life to Him? It may be that on account of some peculiarities in your belief on other subjects no church will receive you as a member. But what does that signify? Give thy heart and life to Him at home, and be saved there. And, if your mind have not decided this, if it feel a difficulty in determining whether Jesus Christ was a mere man, who taught good morals, or the Son of God in human form, who made an offering of Himself for the expiation of our guilt, then I fear I must proclaim you dishonest, as one who merely pretends that he believes that this New Testament is an inspired Book

of certain and unerring truth ; and that you had better return to a previous position, and say that you halt because you are not sure but that Voltaire and Paine were the wise men, and Milton and Newton the ignominious slaves of superstition.—*Ibid.*

V. Its Mischief.

[11546] Sinful delay—(1) Hardens the heart. The longer we continue in sin, the more the conscience is seared, and the affections deadened. Spiritual deafness grows by degrees. (2) Makes the inclination to holy duties less and less pressing. (3) Makes it harder every day to break with sin. Inveterate habits are hard to uproot. A plant newly set may soon be pulled up, but a tree that hath grown long hath deeper roots and firmer hold. (4) Provides greater sorrow for ourselves in the future. If true repentance come in time, it will bring deeper regrets; if it never come, it will ensure deeper remorse.—*G. S. Bowes.*

[11547] Procrastination has been called "the thief of time." I wish it were no worse than a thief. But it is a murderer, and that which it kills is not time only, but the immortal soul.—*Nevins.*

VI. Its Heinousness.

[11548] What is delay but—(1) Direct disobedience to God's clear commands (Heb. iii. 7, 8). (2) Base ingratitude for all God's goodness (Deut. xxxii. 6). (3) Grievous disingenuity? We do not deal with God as we would have Him deal with us. If we have any request to make of Him we want to be heard speedily (Psa. cii. 2). We soon cry, Lord, how long? And shall God stand waiting, till we choose our own time to turn to Him? (4) Dishonouring in the highest degree to God to rob Him of His tribute of service. To give the best of our life to Satan and the world, and put off the Almighty with the dregs. (5) Running a dangerous risk for ourselves. Putting off the most solemn concerns upon a needless uncertainty ; as if a man was resolved to suffer shipwreck, from the uncertain hope that he might possibly escape and be saved ! (6) Setting at naught all sound reason. Surely (*a*) the fitness of things demands that the most important matters should have the first attention (Matt. vi. 33). (*b*) The terms of the gospel will never be more easy than they are now. (*c*) The excuses for delay will not bear examination even now, certainly not at the great reckoning day.—*G. S. Bowes.*

[11549] Such is the folly of procrastination. Observe, again, its sin. How it dishonours God ! First, by saying His service is so burdensome you will defer taking it on as long as possible, and not torment yourself before your time. Secondly, by the service you prefer to His ; think what it is which keeps you back from God. Thirdly, robbing God of present service. Fourthly, giving Him the worst of your time.—*Rev. W. Anderson.*

[11550] 1. Every day of delay is a day of danger.

2. So soon as repentance is needed, *i.e.*, so soon as you have sinned, it is your duty to repent.

3. Delay provokes more the anger of God.

4. God often gives, but never promises, space for repentance.

5. Delay entails loss of time, and may entail irretrievable loss.

6. To lie under the guilt of unrepented sin is to be in a state wherein we can do nothing good.

7. Every delay is a step toward final impenitence.

8. Refusing to repent is itself an additional sin.—*Condensed from Bp. Jeremy Taylor.*

VII. Encouragement to Immediate Action in Regard to Spiritual Interests.

[11551] I. That the Lord is specially near to some. 1. To the young soul is then (1) purer ; (2) more tender ; (3) less rebellious. Now best time. Never more convenient season. 2. To those who are convinced of sin and feel their need of Him.

II. That these may easily find Him now, with more difficulty afterwards, perhaps not at all. Delay will bring (1) more difficulty ; (2) more danger ; (3) it may bring damnation.

III. That there is hope for the oldest and most hardened sinners who have let best time pass. Salvation offered them on two difficult terms. 1. Casting off of evil habits. 2. The abandonment of impious, iniquitous thoughts. If comply, two things offered : 1. Mercy. 2. Multiplied pardons. Conclusion : Do not defer your soul's safety until (1) to-morrow ; (2) your dying day. Perhaps now or never.—*E. D. Solomon.*

[11552] Do you know how many times the word "now" occurs in the Bible? Over two hundred times. When does the Bible say is the best time to repent? Now. That God will forgive? Now. That it is the only safe time to attend to the matters of the soul? Now.—*Talmage.*

VIII. Reply to the Apologies ordinarily made for Deferring the Season of Serious Thought.

1 **I have not time enough at present, and wait for a season of leisure and composure of mind.**

[11553] I wonder what it can be that is of so much importance by which your time is so engrossed that you cannot spare an hour of it for deliberation on the subject of religion. Say not that you must provide your own and your family's bread. There is no man who, over and above

the time necessary for this, has not leisure hours every day of the week beside the rest of Sabbath. What, then, I insist, is your excuse? Ah, it is something so idle and paltry, if not criminal, that you dare not name it even to yourself. Suppose it were the noblest of all earthly pursuits—the pursuit of science—who would find courage to say, in reply to the remonstrance of his friend, that his mathematics leave him no time for considering the question of religion; and if even this answer would be scorned as the apology of a fool, how much more that of thousands who, were they to speak the truth, would reply that it is amusement and merriment, or something vainer and more sinful, which spares them no time for setting about to determine whether there be a God whom they should worship, and an eternity for which they should make preparation? Oh, how busy you are! Yet be not deceived, though you may find no time to think of death, death is thinking of you. Even already his cruel eye may have fixed on you and marked you for his speedy prey. And when the mortal struggle comes, it will probably so fully engage you, that there will be some grounds for your apology that there is no time now for determining anything about religion. Take warning before it be too late. You cannot possibly have anything which it so deeply concerns your welfare to have presently determined as that question about religion. How long will ye halt? Ah, how much reason there is for apprehending that it is because they are afraid that were they to commence the investigation they would find the evidence too clear, and be compelled by its strength to become devout worshippers and obedient, heavenly-minded servants of the Eternal One, that they delay so long approaching the inquiry. But in the same proportion is the guilt of their procrastination increased.

IX. Means Necessary to watch against this Sin, and to be Free from its Guilt.

[11554] First felicitate yourselves on your choice; secondly, beware of apostasy; thirdly, amend presently what is amiss.—*Rev. W. Anderson.*

X. Homiletic Hints.

[11555] A procrastinating hearer (Acts xxiv. 25). Here are—1. Terrified conviction of guilt. 2. Secret purpose of amendment. 3. Infatuated delay of reformation.—*T. Barrow.*

19

HALTING BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS.

I. Origin of this Sin.

[11556] Indecision has its origin in—1. Not considering necessity of decision; sin of hesitation. 2. Want of moral courage. 3. Some besetting sin. 4. Spirit of procrastination. 5. Mistaken views of what is requisite to this state of mind.

II. Its Phases.

1 Failing to have a full and unwavering belief in the great truths of revelation.

[11557] Though they dare not conclude that there is no God, no heaven, no hell, no Saviour, no such thing as the new birth and experimental religion, yet they do not come up to an unwavering belief of these things. The question respecting their truth floats unsettled in their minds. They prevailingly fear that these things will prove true at last; but from a reluctance to find them real, and under the attractions of worldly objects, they suffer their minds to flit about them in uncertainty. This state is as full of danger as it is of guilt. These great matters are infinitely too important to be left in doubt. Either they are realities or they are not. If they are not, the settling of this point would remove many dismal forebodings. But if these things are to prove true at last, what will become of those who doubted? Ruined, condemned, lost, and crying to rocks and mountains to cover them. To have doubted will be found as fatal as to have disbelieved. If there is one chance in a thousand that these things will be found eternal realities, no time ought to be lost in examining and deciding. The least delay is madness. Let the point be immediately settled whether the awful representations of the Bible do indeed present realities. Let none who expect to die any longer halt between two opinions.—*E. D. Griffin, D.D.*

2 The being rationally convinced of the truth of the Bible, but having no corresponding feeling and practice.

[11558] Such persons admit the reality and importance of religion, and mean one day to attend to it, but they are not yet ready. At different periods, from childhood to hoary age, they appoint seasons when they *will* begin, but the season passes and nothing is done. They would not for worlds have it settled that they shall die without religion, and yet they have no heart to enter on the work. For no consideration would they renounce salvation, and yet they cannot give up the delights of sin and the world. In this way many of them will continue to halt until they plunge into eternal death. God has been so long pouring His glories into our world, that they want no public trial to con-

vince their understandings of His existence or perfections ; but their hearts cleave to idols and are enmity against Him.—*Ibid.*

3 The resting upon a doubtful hope.

[11559] Gratified not to know that they are the enemies of God, they tolerate themselves in not knowing that they are His friends. They do not bring the great question to a decision, and so post on to judgment without knowing on which side they stand or to what world they are going. They will not deny the duty of making their "calling and election sure," and yet their indecision remains. And why do they doubt? It is because they do not love God enough, and have not engaged with sufficient decision on His side. They know they love their friends, because they love them with ardour : and why is their love to God so wavering that they cannot distinguish it from enmity? Such indecision ought not to be. If the sinner is bound to love God at once, the Christian is bound to love Him with all the heart ; and that would leave not a lingering doubt behind. The Christian is as really to blame for his doubt as the sinner is for his enmity. And this wavering is against himself. It mars his comfort and endangers his salvation.—*Ibid.*

4 The abstaining from a public profession upon suitable occasions.

[11560] It was to bring the Israelites to a public acknowledgment of God that this trial was instituted on Carmel. The display of God's authority and honour before men was one great object of a visible Church. To do His will is something more than to acknowledge Him in secret ; it is to bear public testimony for Him before the world. In a day when the name of God is blasphemed by thousands, it is time for His friends to declare themselves. The visible kingdom of Satan is thronged, and shall the visible kingdom of Christ be empty? Shall His friends have so doubtful a character that none can tell on which side they are? If He is worthy of being loved in secret, why not honour Him before the world? If not worthy of public honour, why worship Him in secret? Halt no longer between two opinions. Either disclaim all respect for Him in secret, or treat Him with reverence before the world.—*Ibid.*

III. DISSUASIVES.

1 It is a miserable condition.

[11561] The undecided man is the irresolute man—the man thinking of two things, but absolutely choosing, with full and practical purpose, neither—the double-minded man, or as the word is, the two-souled man—the man who is like a substance ever floating between two objects, now carried by force of tide towards one, and then towards another.—*J. A. James.*

[11562] To be undecided is to be in a state of hesitancy, irresoluteness, unfixedness. An undecided man is occasionally impressed ; at other times in a state of total indifference. His judgment inclines to religion, and sometimes nearly draws round his heart. He goes out half way to meet it, then turns back again. Now he looks towards true Christians as the happiest people, then he hankers after the company and amusements of the people of the world. He cannot quite give up the subject, nor can he fully embrace it. He has occasional impressions and wishes, but no fixed deliberate choice.—*Ibid.*

2 It is spiritual retrogradation and ruin.

[11563] It is as if a man were standing on the shore close to where a ship is moored. There is but a line between, and a step may cross it. But the one is fixed, the other moves, and all the future existence depends on that one step—new lands, a new life, and God's great wide world. In the spiritual sphere, to halt is to fall away, to stand still is to be left on the shore.—*Ker.*

3 It is indescribable folly.

[11564] Those who halt between two opinions in the matter of religion are like travellers who halt in indecision at cross-roads, with tempest and the night hurrying up behind them ; like a railway pointsman who hesitates which way to move the points whilst a train is rapidly approaching ; like a pilot who doubts what to do with the helm when the ship is driving before the wind through a dangerous channel.—*Union Magazine.*

4 It is virtually siding with the world against God.

[11565] The truth is, from a fixed law and a principle inherent in nature, which the reason of Plato was able to expose clearly, it is with nations and with whole ages as with men individually—their energies must be devoted either to religion or to the world ; they must adopt the views and perform the service of either the one or the other ; and on their choice depends the whole order of life, and all that gives character and peculiar expression to their spirit, manners, customs, and institutions.—*Kenelm Digby.*

[11566] No man can make religion his business and the world too ; no man can have two chief goods. It is indeed more impossible than to serve two masters : forasmuch as the heart is more laid out on what a man loves than upon what he serves. Besides that, the soul is of a stinted operation, and cannot exert its full force and vigour upon two diverse and much less contrary objects. For that one of them will be perpetually counterworking the other, and so far as the soul inclines to the one it must in proportion leave and go off from the other. For why else should the word of truth so positively tell us that "if we love the world, the love of the Father is not, cannot be in us"?

[11567] As no servant can be sustained by one master, and no soldier can take pay from one government, and, giving but half his time

and service to that master or government, devote the other half to some other and unfriendly power without forfeiting his character for fidelity, so no man can be guiltless who, owing his life to God's creating and sustaining power, and his salvation to God's Son, tries to divide his service between God and the world.—*W. Harris.*

[11568] Amid the stirring and manifold activities of the age in which we live, to be neutral in the strife is to rank with the enemies of the Saviour. There is no greater foe to the spread of His cause in the world than the placid indifferentism which is too honourable to betray, while it is too careless or too cowardly to join Him.—*Wm. M. Punshon.*

5 It is a guilty position.

[11569] We may lose heaven by neutrality as well as by hostility; by wanting oil, as well as by drinking poison. An unprofitable servant shall as much be punished as a prodigal son. Undone duty will undo our souls.

[11570] Indecision in religion arises (1) not from want of information about rival claimants —God and world; (2) Not from natural ability to decide.

20

CANT.

I. Technical Use of the Word.

[11571] There is such a thing as a peculiar word or phrase cleaving, as it were, to the memory of the writer or speaker, and presenting itself to his utterance at every turn. When we observe this, we call it a cant word or cant phrase.—*Paley.*

II. Definition.

[11572] Cant is the voluntary overcharging or prolonging of a real sentiment.—*Hazlitt.*

[11573] Cant is the purest talk of a profession. —*Coleridge.*

III. Special Liability of Christians to this Failing.

[11574] I cannot tell why, but professedly religious men, in all countries, in all religions, are, and always have been, tempted to be mean, and cunning, and false at times. It is so, and there is no denying it: when all other sins are shut out from them by their religious profession, and their care for their own character, and their fear of hell, the sin of lying, for some strange reason, is left open to them, and to it they are tempted to give way. For God's sake—for the sake of Christ, who was full of grace and truth—for your own sakes—struggle against that. . . . For God is a God of truth, and no liar shall stand in His sight, let him be never so religious: He requires truth in the inward parts, and truth will have; and whom He loves He will chasten, as He chastened Jacob of old, till He has made him understand that honesty is the best policy; and that whatever false prophets may tell you, there is not one law for the believer and another for the unbeliever; but whatsoever a man sows, that shall he reap, and receive the due reward of the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or evil.—*Canon Kingsley.*

IV. Its Evil Consequences.

[11575] The habit of speaking and acting without correspondent conviction is of the very nature of sin. It makes life hollow and insincere, it perverts the understanding, it impairs the sense of right and truth, it withers up the affections.—*J. T. Taylor.*

V. Its Loathsomeness.

[11576] If the choice rested with us, we should say, Give us back our wolves again—restore our Danish invaders—curse us with any evil but the evil of a canting, deluded populace.—*Sydney Smith.*

[11577] Cant may be unconscious, in which case it is innocent in the person using it, but none the less mischievous in its influence on others. It may, on the other hand, be conscious, in which case it is hypocritical and thoroughly base. It is to be found in pulpit and pew, in prayer-meetings and conference rooms. Such assumed solemnity of face and voice, such studied efforts after the unnatural in tone and bearing, such overwhelming anxiety for souls—which, if real, would break the heart that feels it, but which is nevertheless carried without loss of appetite or sleep—such devotional stupidity and pious ignorance, as are manifested by many professors of religion, is enough to sharpen the edge of satire against it, and disgust the manly.

[11578] We know not a more certain symptom of hypocrisy in religion than in minds, themselves obviously worldly in the extreme, an exaggerated condemnation of all little worldlinesses in all other honest people, gravely jogging, or gravely skipping, along their path of life. Those people are often the least worldly on whom they who make the loudest boast of their unworldliness seek basely to affix that opprobrious epithet. For they walk the world with a heart pure as it is cheerful; they are, by that unpretending purity, saved from infection; as there are as many fair and healthy faces to be seen in the smoke and stir of cities as in the rural wilds, so also are there as many fair and healthy spirits. The world, the wicked world, has not that power over us Christians that the canters say; and as for the mere amusements of the world, frivolous as they may too often be, little or no power have they over that which is

"so majestical." And yet, to listen to some folks, you would think that all the boys and girls one sees, "like gay creatures of the element," dancing under a chandelier pendent from the roof, like some starry constellation, were quadrilling away to the sound of music into the bottomless pit. Is it not, for example, most disgusting and loathsome to hear some broad-backed, thick-calved, greasy-faced, well-fed and not badly-drunk caitiff, of some canting caste, distinguished in public and private life for the gross greediness with which they gobble up everything eatable within reach of their hairy fists—preaching and praying, and exhorting young people, full of flesh and blood of the purest and clearest quality, to forsake and forswear the world ; to quell within them all mortal vanities, and appetites, and lusts ?—*Professor Wilson.*

[11579] Is not cant the *materia prima* of the devil, from which all falsehoods, imbecilities, abominations, body themselves ; from which no true thing can come ? For cant is itself properly a double-distilled lie, the second power of a lie. —*T. Carlyle.*

VI. Exhortations and Remarks.

1 Be real however lame your religious service may appear.

[11580] Above all things let us have done with cant. Let us be real in our prayers. It is bad when we use even a form of lofty words embodying elevated experiences if they do not express our real emotion : better even to stumble and break down in prayer beneath a sense of its awfulness than to go glibly on, only impressed by the fact of a congregation listening.

[11581] I call that a great gospel that Dr. Johnson preached, "Clear your mind of cant !" Have no trade with cant. Stand on the cold mud in the frosty weather, but let it be in your own real torn shoes—"that will be better for you," as Mahomet says.—*Carlyle.*

2 Beware of running into the opposite extreme.

[11582] Ministers and other Christian people, in speaking upon religious subjects, may avoid the frequent use of set phrases or forms of expression, while yet they may convey the same thoughts which these phrases or forms were meant to embody ; and some habitual care ought to be taken to do this. If the old phrases are used too freely in setting forth Christian views and feelings, they come to be looked upon by many persons as matters of mere form or habit, empty really of feeling or thought. And it must be admitted that they are sometimes used after this hollow and inexpressive fashion.

[11583] But, seeing this, some persons err in the other direction, and, undertaking to seem at all events to be original and fresh, they lay aside not only the old forms of speech, but the old and true meaning also that was in them. The thing to be aimed at is to use such language as will convey the substance of Christian truth and the reality of Christian experience most clearly and effectively to those that hear us. If a form of words that has been often used is still the best for its purpose, then use it. But if it has gotten to be a mere shell of speech, out of which the life and substance are gone, then break the shell or let it alone, and tell of what was supposed to be or of what ought to be in it. It is not the language of formal creeds that we have now in mind, but the language of exhortation rather in ordinary religious meetings or in personal religious conversations. And for these occasions, if we are careful to speak in the clearest way we can of what we really and heartily believe and feel, we shall not go far amiss in any words we may use.

VII. Warning against Censorious and Uncharitable Judgments.

1 Some people offend in this respect through want of power of expression.

[11584] This is merely the modern limitation of the word, the old one was much more extensive, as any one may see who chooses to consult the play of Ben Jonson lately quoted. The reason why the term "cant" was first applied to religious hypocrisy is this—that ready-made terms tend to keep the mind from sincerely dwelling on its subject ; that, ordinarily, the more the phrasing the less the feeling ; and that, to use the pregnant words of the old commentator, Matthew Henry, men often use certain religious terms, "not because they are deeply affected, but because they know what is meet to be said." One readily sees what this is likely to lead to in action. Nevertheless, it is only fair to say that the poor and ill-educated often use on religious subjects what educated men call cant phrases, not from insincerity, but because their power of expression is limited.—*J. F. Boyes.*

21

CONVENTIONALITIES, RELIGIOUS.

I. Nature of this Sin.

[11585] The Crusaders of old used to bear a painted cross upon their shoulders. It is to be feared that many amongst us take up crosses that sit just as lightly—things of ornament, passports to respectability, the mere conventionalities of religion—a cheap substitute for a struggle we never made, and a crown we never strove for.—*D. Moore.*

[11586] 1. Conventional Christians are professional theists. "They profess—or confess—that they know God." A conventional Christian shudders at the appearance of an atheist, de-

nounces atheism with the utmost vehemence, declares in church every Sunday, in the midst of the great congregation, "I believe in God the Father," &c. In theory he is a theist, he believes in one God, he argues for one God, he preaches one God. 2. Conventional Christians are practical atheists. "In works they deny Him." First, they deny His *authority* in their every-day life; they ignore the claims that He has upon their existence, powers, possessions—all they have and are. They live as if no God existed. In their calculations they do not take Him into account; in their plans they do not consult Him; they do not say, If the Lord will, we will do this or that. Practically, God is not in all their thoughts. Secondly, they deny His *teaching*. Through Christ He teaches doctrines which they deny in their daily life. He teaches that spiritual interests are supreme. They declare in their daily life that temporal interests are paramount. He teaches that no man should live to himself, but should be inspired by that benevolence that will promote the common weal. But they practically declare that self-interests are supreme, that every man should work for himself, regardless of the common good. He teaches that war is an abominable crime. They practically declare that of all professions it is the most honourable, of all institutions the most glorious. He teaches to honour all men—that men should be honoured on account of what they are. They declare that those only are to be honoured who are endowed with wealth, and move in the pageantry of worldly pomp and power.

Sad is the confession; yet truth requires that it should be made, that conventional Christianity is practical atheism, and practical atheism is a thousand times worse than speculative. This is an atheism we cannot touch by argument, an atheism nourished by churches, fostered by all types and classes of man.—*Ibid.*

II. Its Evil Consequences.

1 It checks earnestness.

[11587] When shall we come down from our stilts, and be in earnest with a perishing world? Decorum and conventionality are not the most needed virtues just now.—*J. W. Alexander.*

2 It places custom before principle.

[11588] The teeming masses of mankind must go by rule. They must ask, What is custom? what is law? and they must go by that. Yet that is not the best guide for all; nor is it an adequate guide. Wider civilization and a higher life are full of things that must of necessity be outside of customs and rules, and for which no precedent can be established, and these must be determined by the application of principles. —*Beecher.*

3 It places custom before God's Word.

[11589] It is reported of the king of Morocco that he told the English ambassador in King John's time that he had lately read St. Paul's Epistles, and that, if he had to choose his religion, he would embrace Christianity; but, said he, every one should die in the faith wherein he was born. Many are like the king of Morocco, more governed by custom than Scripture, choosing rather to follow what hath been, though never so absurd and irregular, than to consider what should be, though ever so orthodox and uniform. —*Things New and Old.*

4 It is an insult to God.

[11590] When religion is attended to as a mere matter of form, when sentiments are expressed without conviction, services rendered without self-sacrifice, the insincerity is an insult to Omniscience. God is a Spirit, &c.—*Homilist.*

22

FORM OF GODLINESS WITHOUT THE POWER.

I. Its Commonness.

[11591] To what an extent doctrines intrinsically fitted to make the deepest impression upon the mind may remain in it as dead beliefs is exemplified by the manner in which the majority of believers hold the doctrines of Christianity. These are considered sacred, and accepted as laws, by all professing Christians. Yet it is scarcely too much to say that not one Christian in a thousand guides or tests his individual conduct by reference to those laws. The standard to which he does refer it, is the custom of his nation, his class, or his religious profession. Christians are not insincere when they say they believe these maxims; they do believe them as people believe what they have always heard lauded and never discussed. They have no hold on ordinary believers. They have a habitual respect for the sound of them, but no feeling which spreads from the words to the things signified, and forces the mind to take them in and make them conform to the formula. Whenever conduct is concerned, they look round for Mr. A. and B. to direct them how far to go in obeying Christ.—*J. S. Mill.*

[11592] There is, alas! too much of truth in this hostile criticism; but its charge is too sweeping, yet we can often learn the real character of our faults and failings from the outside world who keenly scans our actions.—*C. N.*

II. Points of Resemblance and Difference between the Profession and the Power of Godliness.

[11593] How like to a Christian a man may be and yet possess no vital godliness! Walk through the British Museum, and you will see

all the orders of animals standing in their various places, and exhibiting themselves with the utmost possible propriety. So there are many stuffed professors. They have all the externals of religion and morality; all they want is life.—*Spurgeon* (*adapted*).

[11594] The profession and the power of godliness differ, as leaves on a tree and good fruit; a tree that hath fruit will usually have leaves; a man that hath the power will usually have a form of godliness; but as some trees, as the ivy, are never without leaves, yet never bear good fruit while they live, so many profess Christ all their days, who never bring forth fruit worthy of repentance and amendment of life. Some defy the devil with their lips who deify him in their lives.—*Swinnock*.

[11595] 1. The form of godliness is common, but the power of it is rare.

2. The form of godliness is cheap, but the power of it costs much.

3. The form of godliness is easy, but the power of it is difficult.

4. The form of godliness is a credit, but the power of it is a reproach.

5. The form of godliness is pleasing, but its power is displeasing to the ignoble part of a Christian.

6. The form of godliness may exist with secret and with open wickedness, but the power of godliness cannot; it lays the axe to the very root of all sin, both secret and open.—*Rev. Philip Brooks*.

III. Its Various Forms.

[11596] In general it consists in an external show and profession of religion, or of any eminent part of it, or of that which is reputed to be so; and a form of religion is more or less complete, according to the extent of it. Some pitch upon one part of religion, and set themselves chiefly to make a show of that; others take in more parts of it, and endeavour to express and counterfeit them; so that the forms of religion are various and different, and not to be reduced to any fixed and constant standard; but they commonly appear in some one or more of these shapes. 1. An external devotion. 2. An orthodox profession of the Christian faith. 3. Enthusiasm and pretence to inspiration 4. A great external show of mortification. 5. An imperfect repentance and partial reformation. 6. The appearance and ostentation of some particular grace and virtue. 7. A great zeal for some party, or opinions, or circumstances of religion. 8. Silliness and freakishness, and either a pretended or real ignorance in the common affairs and concernments of human life. 9. Much noise and talk about religion.

These are the several forms of religion which men are wont to assume. Not that these do always go singly; but sometimes men put on one, sometimes more of them, as may best serve their several turns and interests. Nor would I be understood to condemn all these; for several of these particulars which I have mentioned are good in themselves, and necessary parts of religion; but being destitute of other things wherein the life of religion doth consist, they are but a form of godliness.—*Abp. Tillotson*.

IV. Its Stages and Degrees.

1 There are some who remain in a formal state for years and years.

[11597] We have often seen a tree which looked like other trees, but inwardly it was hollow, and nothing but the bark supported it. And so formal attention to religious duties may be maintained for a long time before the crash comes which reveals the utter ruin and desolation of the spiritual life.—*J. G. Pilkington*.

[11598] Nature presents us with many illustrations of this. The flowers in your garden may for a time retain the form when life is extinct; the ancient oak in the forest may stand for years erect when life has long since passed away; so do we often find the form of godliness when the power, the life, are wanting.—*Bowes*.

[11599] There are some who remain in this formal state for years and years. They go to hear the gospel; they love to hear it; they would be very sorry if they were not able to attend a place of worship and hear their favourite minister, for he affords them much delight, and even when he rebukes them, they admire his courage and fidelity. And yet no change has been wrought in them. They have heard and their souls do *not* live. They are strangers to the power of godliness. They will not allow the gospel to be the power of God unto *their* salvation. "I never knew you," says Christ to these.—*Monthly Visitor*.

2 There are some who live in known and notorious sin, and yet observe a routine of religious observances.

[11600] Strong devotional feeling is sometimes found in connection with very languid perceptions of moral integrity. It is only putting an extreme case of this delusive tendency, altogether inconsistent with faith in Christ, to mention the well-known fact, that very rude and immoral persons are found to observe a routine of religious observances; and nothing can exceed the zeal of devotees in the sacrifices they make in the services of religion, whilst they are exceedingly obtuse in their moral perceptions, and freely indulge in practices which violate the simplest laws of truth and righteousness.—*Percy Strutt*.

3 There are some who eloquently preach the truth which has no echo in their own hearts.

[11601] It is possible for a man to have a pulpit, and to have no God; to have a Bible, and no Holy Ghost; to be employing his lips

in uttering the eloquence of truth, when his heart has gone astray from all that is true and beautiful and good ; at the very moment his lips are fired by the words that ought to have converted himself, his heart is not in his work, it is wandering far off yonder, buying and selling and getting gain, sucking in poison where it ought to have extracted honey, making the word of God of none effect, and causing the people to blaspheme and alienate themselves from God! —*J. Parker, D.D.*

V. Its Uselessness.

[11602] Forms were designed by Him who knoweth our frame to be the means by which we might rise to the enjoyment of Himself. But when the mind halts in the symbol instead of rising from it to the thing signified, when the man runs up and down the ladder instead of reaching the eminence which commands the glorious prospect, he loses the enjoyment inseparable from intercourse with the blissful reality.—*Pearson.*

VI. Its Evil Results.

[11603] A form of godliness is conservative of the power. Confessing Christ our own heart is confirmed. But let us not content ourselves with mere confession. To possess religion and not to profess it is bad enough ; but who shall tell the harm to himself and others and the cause of Christ that is done by him who professes but does not possess it?

[11604] There is more hope of repentance, more hope of final salvation, for the very murderer, shuddering in the condemned cell, and wakened up to an awful overwhelming sense of the black transgressions of his life, than for the decent respectable man who, without ever heartily believing in Jesus, has, year by year, never missed a Sunday from church, nor a sacrament from the communion-table ; and who has thus grown so thoroughly familiar with religious truths, that the mention of them makes no more impression upon him than a wave makes upon a rock. The guilty criminal is now, at least, brought to a state of intense fear, of intense alarm and concern about his soul ; and God only knows what good may come out of that. But, oh ! what movement can come of pure stagnation ! What can you look for but doing nothing, from the man who has arrived at feeling nothing !—*A. K. H. Boyd.*

VII. Warnings against Drawing False Conclusions on account of the Commonness of this Evil.

1 We should never be discouraged because of the paucity of real Christians.

[11605] Among the multitude of professors, Christ has commonly but a thin backing in a winnowing and sifting time. The heap of corn is but small when the straw and chaff are separated from it. The greatest number of professors usually comply with the side of the times. Defection from Christ is of a very spreading and contagious character ; a little of this leaven is fair to leaven the whole lump. The way of the multitude is always to be suspected ; people should never think themselves safe because they have many neighbours ; neither need the followers of Christ be discouraged because of the paucity of their numbers.—*E. C. Erskine.*

2 We should never be tempted to question the existence of real sincerity because some leading professors prove insincere.

[11606] Every now and then we turn up a fair stone which lies upon the greensward of the professing church, surrounded with the verdure of apparent goodness, and to our astonishment we find beneath it all kinds of filthy insects and loathsome reptiles, and in our disgust at such hypocrisy we are driven to exclaim, "All men are liars ; there are none in whom we can put any trust at all." It is not fair to say so of all ; but really the discoveries which are made of the insincerity of our fellow-creatures are enough to make us despise our kind, because they can go so far in appearances, and yet have so little soundness of heart.

VIII. Reproofs to Formal and Lifeless Christians.

[11607] Either take Christ in your lives and cast Him out of your lips ; either be that thou seemest, or else be what thou art.—*Dyer.*

[11608] Is religion one of the fine arts, that it should consist simply in going to meeting in good clothes every Sunday, saying grace at table, and praying night and morning? Are we so literally a flock that we have nothing to do but to be fed all the year, yielding only the annual fleece which forms our pastor's salary? —*J. G. Holland.*

23

FORMALISM.

I. Its Description.

[11609] Formalists are like the troops in Ezekiel's army before they were quickened : covered well with plump flesh and fair skin, yet no breath was in them ; at distance a famous army, but on near approach, all dead men—no life in them until the Spirit breathed upon them. —*Berridge.*

[11610] The religion of some people is constrained ; like the cold bath when it is used, not for pleasure, but from necessity, for health, into which one goes with reluctance, and is glad when able to get out. But religion to the true

believer is like water to a fish. It is his element. He lives in it, and could not live out of it.—*John Newton.*

II. Its Source.

[11611] Until this inward revelation comes, until the moral ear is opened to the spirituality of the Divine law (Psa. xl. 6–10), man's religion is little else than ritualism in some form or another—the ritualism of sacerdotal influences, of sacred language, of devotional movements; the ritualism of postures, places, periods.—*Dr. Thomas.*

III. Its Signs and Results.

[11612] (1) Self-righteous pride. (2) Self-satisfaction. (3) Party prejudice. (4) Resistance to the truth. (5) Assumption of religious superiority. (6) Enmity to the truth.—*G. S. Bowes.*

IV. Its Various Aspects.

1 It is spiritual conventionalism.

[11613] How many, again, are Christians, they know not why; upon the same terms that others are Mohammedans — because it is the religion of their country—by fate or by accident, not by their own choice and judgment! The same inconsideration makes them be Christians that makes others be none.—*J. Howe*, 1684.

2 It is spiritual legerdemain.

[11614] If you hearken to their voice, if you look upon their eyes, if you observe the motion of their hands, and the bowing of their knees, and the shaking of their heads, you would think they were men of much religion and of much godliness; but if you look into their hearts and lives, you will find them to be the greatest renouncers and deniers of religion and godliness in the world. They have the semblance of godliness, but not the substance; they have the lineaments of godliness, but not the life; they have the face of godliness, but not the heart; they have the form, but not the power. They are like a well-drawn picture, which hath all the likeness of a man, but wants the principle of motion and operation. They are blazing comets, painted tombs, stage-players, or devils in an angel's habit.—*T. Brooks.*

[11615] It is a ridiculous thing and fit for satire, to persons of judgment, to see what shifts formalists have, and what prospectives to make superficies to seem a body that hath depth and bulk.—*Lord Bacon.*

3 It is spiritual idolatry.

[11616] Let us conceive the Almighty looking down from His throne upon a multitude of formalists assembled together to worship Him avowedly, but not "in spirit and in truth." And what does He behold? As in religion the heart is everything, so when He perceives the heart is absent from the service which is offered up, the man is absent from His presence. The Omniscient beholds in the place of a sincere offering a piece of solemn formality going through the attitudes and signs of devotion, and even uttering the affected language of confession, supplication, and praise, but entirely devoid of any corresponding emotions within. He beholds in the rites of such a worship—in means converted into ends—in forms erected into objects of trust —an array of spiritual idols, substituted in His place, and as effectually supplanting Him, and robbing Him of the homage due unto His name, as if so many crucifixes and carved images were brought out into the midst of the assembly for them to bow down to and worship. The idols of the heathen stand between heaven and earth, obscuring the vision of God, intercepting and appropriating the mounting incense which should have ascended to the eternal throne. The rites of formalists are their spiritual idols; instead of leading their thoughts onward to God, they stand between them and the professed object of their worship concealing God from their view, engrossing their soul to themselves, and leaving behind them a feeling of satisfaction, simply because they had been revered and observed.—*Dr. Harris.*

4 It is spiritual atrophy.

[11617] A state of spiritual formality is a state of spiritual death or deadness. It is displeasing to God and prejudicial to the Church. In all its results it is the reverse of true grace. True grace softens the heart. Formality hardens it. True grace nourishes the soul. Formality induces a spiritual atrophy.—*G. S. Bowes.*

V. Dissuasives.

1 It is condemned by reason.

[11618] What can be a greater insult to the Divine Majesty?—to Divine omniscience, as if the Almighty God could not see through the disguise?—to His holiness, as if He would tolerate the evil?—to His goodness, as if He gave His grace to hearts unable to receive it.—*Ibid.*

2 It is repugnant to Scripture.

[11619] It is so as shown in God's express declarations of hatred (Psa. l. 7–22; Isa. i. 10–15), of His rejection of false worship (Matt. xv. 8, 9). His injunctions for worship that is pure and spiritual (John iv. 24; Philip. iii. 3).—*Ibid.*

[11620] There is something singularly impressive in reading our Lord's emphatic testimonies to the comparative worthlessness of sacrifices and offerings, of all merely ritualistic observances issuing from the heart of the old Jewish economy; spoken at the very time when all these statutes and ordinances of the Lord were in full force, that define so minutely and prescribe so peremptorily the formalities of the Jewish worship.—*Rev. W. Hanna.*

3 It is bootless.

[11621] What a factory would be with water-wheels flashing, and bands pulling, and machinery drumming, yet producing no cotton or no carpets—that is a Church with all the ordinances in full operation, yet producing no glorious results; a merely formal Church is a factory in full work doing nothing.—*Talmage.*

VI. Warnings.

[11622] 1. A conspicuous feature of the "last days" (2 Tim. iii. 1, 4). 2. A dangerous ground of false confidence. External devoutness is no sign of inward grace: compare the Pharisees of our Lord's time, the devotees of Popery. An Italian brigand will often fall on his knees, with the greatest reverence, before a wayside Madonna, whilst he is purposing to commit some atrocious crime. Mahommedans, before beginning work, of whatever kind, invoke the most merciful and compassionate God, in their prayer, "Bismilleh." 3. Not incompatible with a heart at enmity with God (Isa. i. 10–15; 2 Tim. iii. 1–4). Some of the heaviest charges against Israel, in Hosea and Amos, are found where the Mosaic ritual was maintained.—*G. S. Bowes.*

[11623] We are bound to say that we know not more unpromising subjects for the preaching of the gospel than those who are punctiliously attentive to the forms of religion, and who attach a worth and a merit to their careful performance of certain moral duties.—*Rev. H. Melvill.*

VII. Admonitions.

[11624] Christianity is a spiritual system. Come, then, to this place to worship with the soul, to elevate the spirit to God. Let not this house be desecrated by a religion of show. Let it not degenerate into a place of forms. Let not your pews be occupied by lifeless machines. Do not come to take part in lethargic repetitions of sacred words. Do not come from a cold sense of duty merely. Come to worship in spirit and in truth; with the understanding, intelligently, with just and honourable conceptions of the infinite Father; with the heart, with life, fervour, zeal.—*Channing.*

[11625] Have not your observance of the holy day of rest—the soul's sabbath—and your periodical repetition of those noble words of prayer in which we join from time to time been actuated by a habit that the customs of society have imposed upon you, rather than by any devout love of this great day, or any spiritual appreciation and use of those hallowed services? Have you not practically regarded the observance of the Lord's day, it may be almost unconsciously, rather as a social than a spiritual occupation? And have you not rested satisfied with the stated repetition of these prayers, while thoughts of man have been more present than thoughts of God? What is all this but essential Pharisaism—modernized Pharisaism?

VIII. Needed Caution against rushing into the Opposite Extreme.

[11626] There must be a cup to carry the water from the well. But forms are neither to be undervalued nor overvalued.

[11627] Mere forms and rites can no more satisfy a spiritual God than incense can satisfy a hungry man; yet spiritual worship does not reject material expression and form.—*Van Doren.*

[11628] Forms, creeds, liturgies, are indispensable. Apples must have rinds, rising walls must have scaffolding, and Christianity must have forms. But mere outward proprieties will not make a useful church.—*Talmage.*

[11629] To trust in forms and ceremonies is superstition; not to comply with them is pride. —*Pascal.*

[11630] They are valuable in their own place, and for their own purposes; frames, as they are, to set the picture in; caskets for truth's jewels; dead poles, no doubt, yet useful to support living plants, and very beautiful when the bare stem is festooned with green leaves, and crowned with a head of flowers.—*Dr. Guthrie.*

[11631] True philosophy respects formalities as much as pride despises them. We require a discipline for our conduct just as we require an order for our ideas.—*Portales.*

[11632] Bodily demonstrations and palpable emblems are not to be despised or neglected. They are sometimes necessary, as the fruit and expression of faith and decision. They may be important helps in spiritual exercises; but they are not absolutely indispensable. The love and service of the soul are of more value than genuflections and book-devotion.

[11633] The twofold nature of man, body and spirit, maketh it necessary that everything by which he is to be moved should have an outward form. Hence the great Father of spirits hath given to all the attributes of His being an outward form and manifestation. The written law, which is holy, and just, and good, is the form of His holiness; and the gospel of His Son is the form of His mercy and grace. Heaven is the outward form of His blessedness, and hell of His fearful wrath against the rebellious. And every doctrine in revelation is a form to the intellect of some spiritual attribute of the Invisible; the doctrine of the atonement of His justice, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit of His help. And to the most noble and capital truths, or doctrines, He giveth not only a form for the intellect, but for the very sense of man. His incarnate Son is the fleshly form of His glory and the visible image of His Person. The doctrine of our natural corruption and gracious

purification by the blood of Christ hath the sensible form of baptism; and the doctrine of our continued sustenance by His Word and Spirit hath the sensible form of the Supper; and the doctrine of the creation of the world, and the resurrection of Christ, which is the re-creation of the world, hath the sensible form of the weekly Sabbath; and the visible Church is the sensible form of the heavenly communion. Nay, there is nothing in the being and purpose of God which it might benefit man to know that hath not a form of expressing itself to the soul of man through the intellect or through the sense.—*E. Irving.*

24

HYPOCRISY.

I. Meaning of Term.

[11634] The word means "to represent another person," as the ancient players did, under a mask—to personate, to try to be thought something or somebody different from what we are.—*Parkhurst.*

II. Its Definition.

[11635] This, then, is hypocrisy—not simply for a man to deceive others, knowing all the while that he *is* deceiving them, but to deceive himself *and* others at the same time; to aim at their praise by a religious profession, without perceiving that he loves their praise more than the praise of God, and that he is professing far more than he practises.—*Newman.*

[11636] There are two branches of this trespass upon reality: excess of ceremony and excess of dogma. Like all the great practical interests, religion clothes itself in a dress or form—institutional customs, modes of worship, ordinances. So long as we inherit forms, and have in our natures an element to which visible ceremonials appeal, this tendency will not be eradicated, though it is constantly being modified. The real argument for religious forms is found in all civilized usages, such as the general arrangement of houses, uniformity of clothing, and tokens of recognition.

III. Scripture Comparisons.

[11637] Hypocrites are compared in Scripture to (1) a spider's web (Job viii. 14; Isa. lix. 5, 6); (2) whited sepulchres (Matt. xxiii. 27); (3) leaven (Luke xiii. 21); (4) hidden graves (Luke xi. 44); (5) guest without a wedding garment (Matt. xxii. 11).

IV. Description of Hypocrites.

[11638] The hypocrite sets his watch not by the sun, *i.e.*, the Bible, but by the town clock: what most do, he will do.—*Gurnall.*

[11639] A hypocrite is one who neither is what he seems, nor seems what he is. He is the picture of a saint.—*Mason.*

[11640] He is a Nero within, a Cato without, an equivocal man, a true monster, composed of different and contrary natures.—*St. Jerome.*

[11641] He can digest well enough, with good attention and patience, the debatement of a controversy or commonplace; approve and applaud general discourses and unsearching sermons, especially if they taste something extraordinarily of fulness of reading or fineness of conceit, be made up with some affected mixture of choicest human learning, and commend to the ears of the auditory the excess and excellency of some rarer natural parts. His heart may sometimes even dance and leap within him for joy, not without some outward visible representations, when he shall hear the infiniteness of God's mercy, invaluableness of Christ's bloodshed, preciousness of the promises of life, inconceivableness of those pleasures above, and such other points of exultation and comfort, with a passionate and powerful eloquence expressed something to the life and feelingly amplified, although such inward transitory lightnings in him spring not from the special apprehension of any true real interest in those joyful tidings, but from the natural movingness of the matter, or the vanishing flashes of a temporary faith, or the like; nay, yet further, he may tolerate with reasonable contentment and ease the zealous exagitation of other hateful villanies, the discovery and damnation of any other corruption, so that only his darling pleasure be let alone, his master-sin not meddled with.

[11642] The kite is a bird which delights in the free air, and soars aloft as if it would fain approach to heaven; all the while, however, it keeps its sharp eye continually directed to the earth, if haply it may spy there some prey to seize. And like it are hypocrites—they love to speak of heavenly and spiritual things, they go to church and take the holy Supper, they read, and pray, and sing; but nevertheless their heart retains its earthly inclinations, and they seek that which is temporal more than that which is eternal.—*Gotthold.*

[11643] Religion is the best armour, but the worst cloak. Hypocrites are like pictures on canvas—they show fairest at farthest.—*Adams.*

V. A Pictorial Representation of a Hypocrite.

[11644] A clever painter in London exhibited a piece representing a friar habited in his canonicals. View the painting at a distance, and you would think the friar is in a praying attitude. His hands are clasped together across his breast, his eyes cast down like those of the publican in the gospel, and the good man appears to be quite absorbed in humble adoration.

But take a nearer survey, and the deception vanishes. The book which seemed to be before him is discovered to be a punch-bowl, into which the wretch is all the while in reality only squeezing a lemon. How lively a representation of a hypocrite!

VI. Two Chief Sorts of Hypocrisy.

[11645] There are two sorts of hypocrites—one that are deceived by the outward morality and external religion, and the other are those that are deceived with false discoveries and elevations which often cry down works, and men's own righteousness, and talk much of free grace; but at the same time make righteousness of their discoveries, and of their humiliation, and exalt themselves to heaven with them.—*J. Edwards.*

VII. Its Various Forms.

[11646] His zeal may be zeal for himself. Of course a man is zealous for religion when religion is a help to his business. The sellers of silver shrines are always devoted to the goddess. Hypocrites make again even of godliness.

[11647] A covetous father condemns the prodigality of his extravagant son, and the son again cries out against the avarice of his niggardly father, and thus both seem to condemn sin, but the truth is, neither do it; it is only two extreme sins fighting together, neither of them regarding the rule which God hath laid down.—*Abp. Leighton.*

[11648] Catherine of Russia, when she travelled through her waste dominions, caused painted villages to be raised along her route, that she might be enabled to give way to the imagination that her country was flourishing and populous. It is in such a delusion that mankind in general pass through life, raising up around them, by the power of their own imaginations, a host of supposed good qualities, in the midst of which they walk, as the statues of the gods walk in the processions, listening to a constant hymn in their own praise.

The hypocrite is commonly supposed to be the most profound of all characters. But there is a deeper and more dangerous deceit. There are persons who come to act the hypocrite to themselves. The man who has been deluded by his neighbour for years is not more astonished when his eyes are opened than are the persons now referred to, when their own character stands fully revealed to them.

[11649] Some painters have had such a gift in the lively expressing of the forms of birds and other beasts that true birds and living beasts have been deceived in taking them for their mates. But the hypocrite puts down the painter; for by his glowing and glittering shows in all outward works he doth so perfectly resemble the true Christian, that he deceiveth, not as the painter, silly birds, but reasonable men; yea, learned and experienced Christians.—*Dyke*, 1629.

VIII. Its Nature and Motives.

[11650] It is not that the hypocrite despises a good character that he is not one himself, but because he thinks he can purchase it at a cheaper rate than the practice of it, and thus obtain all the applause of a good man merely by pretending to be so.—*Fielding.*

[11651] The hypocrite serves God for gain. He looks at the emoluments and profits which come in by religion; 'tis not the power of godliness the hypocrite loves, but the gain of godliness; 'tis not the fire of the altar, but the gold of the altar which he adores. This is a religious wickedness. Hypocritical Christians who make an interest of religion, and serve some worldly design by it. These are concerned to understand religion more than ordinary, that they may counterfeit it handsomely, and may not be at a loss when they have occasion to put on the garb of it. And this is one part of the character which the apostle gives of those persons, who, he foretells, would appear in the last days (2 Tim. iii. 2); he says they should be "lovers of their own selves, covetous, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it."—*Abp. Tillotson.*

IX. Its Indications and Tests.

[11652] It is very suspicious that that person is a hypocrite that is always in the same frame, let him pretend it to be never so good.—*Traill.*

X. Its Folly.

[11653] Hypocrisy a folly; for it is much easier, safer, and pleasanter to be the thing which a man seems to appear, than to keep up the appearance of being what he is not.—*Lord Burleigh.*

[11654] It is the greatest madness to be a hypocrite in religion. The world will hate thee because a Christian even in appearance, and God will hate thee because so only in appearance; and thus, having the hatred of both, thou shalt have no comfort in either.—*S. Hall.*

XI. Its Extreme Guilt.

[11655] Of all the forms of infidelity hypocrisy is the form the most infidel, because the hypocrite lies both to heaven and earth, and his life is crime in perfidy and atheism in action.—*R. Glover.*

XII. Its Power of Perversion.

[11656] Hypocrisy by a cruel invention employs the arms of virtues to destroy the virtues themselves: and thus that evil, or rather that plague, ought well to be guarded against which

makes a remedy become a poison, which changes the holiest practices into defects and crimes.—*St. Chrysostom.*

XIII. Its Hatefulness.

[11657] Hypocrisy! thou bane of political and social life! thou God-dishonouring atheist! thou slayer of human virtue, mean and coward slave! thou comest limping after power, to give it a righteous shove—thou shrivelled elf, canting, shuffling, blearing with thy swollen eye and long-drawn visage to sanctify misrule! I turn from thee with nauseous disgust; I shudder at thy contracted, unseemly aspect; thou flatterest alike the worst passions of power, whether to be found in king or people; to neither wilt thou dare to give a good direction, thou offspring of vanity and cowardice!—*Sir R. Maltravers.*

XIV. Its Failure and Uselessness, no Matter how Clever the Imitation.

[11658] You know there is an artificial ruby, an artificial sapphire, and an artificial emerald. Strauss, of Strasburg, discovered that by taking silex and potash, and borax and red lead, he could make a very good imitation of some jewels; but before that Satan found out that he could imitate the Lord's jewels. A composition of orthodox faith and of good works has made many a child of the devil look like a child of the Lord. Nevertheless, borax, potash, silex, and red lead are not jewels.—*Talmage.*

[11659] He who takes copper instead of gold wrongs himself most; the counterfeit saint deceives others while he lives, but deceives himself when he dies. To pretend holiness when there is none is a vain thing. What were the foolish virgins better for their blazing lamps when they wanted oil? What is the lamp of profession without the oil of saving grace? what comfort will a show of holiness yield at last? Will painted gold enrich? painted wine refresh him that is thirsty? will painted holiness be a cordial at the hour of death? A pretence of sanctification is not to be rested in. Many ships that have had the name of the Hope, the Safeguard, the Triumph, yet have been cast away upon the rocks.

[11660] The hope of the hypocrite is like "a spider's web." Like the spider, the hypocrite weaves his web, his hope, his trust, out of his own bowels. It is the creature of his fancy, spun from the materials of self-righteousness. He may call it a garment to hide his shame, but it is a mere web, unfit to cover a naked soul, and easily rent. He may call it a house, but it is unavailable to "hide from the storm, or cover from the tempest." He may hold fast by it, but it shall fall, and he perish in the ruins. There is, there can be, no shelter, safety, nor security, in the cobweb of self-righteousness. If not stripped off in the world, it will be swept away by the first breath of eternity.

[11661] Coals of fire cannot be concealed beneath the most sumptuous apparel—they will betray themselves with smoke and flame; nor can darling sins be long hidden beneath the most ostentatious profession—they will sooner or later discover themselves, and burn sad holes in the man's reputation. Sin needs quenching in the Saviour's blood, not concealing under the garb of religion.—*Spurgeon.*

[11662] There can be no union betwixt God and the hypocrite in regard of the great dissimilitude of dispositions. God is single; and he is double: having a heart and a heart, and therefore cannot be as David, a man according to God's heart. The hypocrite is crooked and God is straight: and how will you compact together, and make even straight and crooked? How can there be friendship betwixt them that are every way of contrary dispositions? But where there is likeness of manners, there easily will hearts be glued and riveted together.—*D. Dyke*, 1642.

XV. Hypocrisy and True Religion contrasted.

[11663] The hypocrite and saint are like two men at sawing—the hypocrite, like him in the pit, looks high upward, but pulls downward; the saint, like him above, looks low, humbly downward, but pulls upward. The hypocrite is like a peach, which covers a ragged, craggy stone under a velvet coat; the saint, like the chestnut, hath a sweet kernel, though the cover be rough. The hypocrite, like Judas, kisses Christ, but betrays Him, and, like ivy, he clasps about Christ, but is not united to Him; he, again, like ivy, derives not sap and nourishment from Him, but from a root of his own. The hypocrite is like a window cushion, fairly wrought without, but stuffed with straw.—*R. Venning.*

XVI. Difference between the Worship of an Unreal and a Real Christian.

[11664] What a weariness is it to serve the Lord! The chrysolite (which is of a golden colour) in the morning is very bright to look on, but towards noon it grows dull, and hath lost its splendour; such are the glistering shows of hypocrites. True delight, like the fire of the altar, never goes out; affliction cannot extirpate it. Psa. cxix. 143: "Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me, yet Thy commandments are my delight."

XVII. The Bigotry and Cruelty of Hypocrites.

[11665] He which professeth the ways of God falsely or formally is ordinarily more bitter, violent, and cruel to a true Christian than pagans and professed opposites. Pilate was more pitiful and kind unto Christ than the Pharisees; Felix more favourable and friendly

to Paul than the high priest. It were better to be a galley-slave to a Turk than under the Spanish inquisition. I would rather fall into the hands of a swaggering good-fellow and notorious sinner, in a point of danger or disgrace, than stand to the mercy of a formal professor and proud Pharisee. Though the notorious sinner be further distant from the Christian in degrees of some kinds of goodness than the formal hypocrite, yet many times he is not so opposite in extremity of malice and height of disdain.

XVIII. The Situation of the Hypocrite at the Judgment Day.

[11666] In their early stage of growth, tares, like other grasses or grains, resemble wheat. In this state they can be distinguished by the practised botanist; but if one attempted to separate them, it would be a difficult matter, and there would be great risk of pulling up some young plants of wheat also. When, however, the fruit or grain is produced, that is, at the time of harvest, the characters of the two plants are easily seen, and there is no difficulty in separating the one from the other.

Robinson during his travels in Palestine saw splendid fields of wheat containing these tares, and it is stated that wheat imported from the Continent is often mixed with darnel. How well, then, do these tares represent those who make a false profession, who appear among God's people, who draw near with their mouth, and honour God with their lips, but their heart is far from Him! Both grow together and may seem alike. Man cannot accurately distinguish between the true and the false. But at the great harvest day the Lord will separate them.—*Prof. Balfour.*

XIX. Connection between Disposition of Character and Hypocrisy.

[11667] He who is passionate and hasty is generally honest; it is your cool dissembling hypocrite of whom you should be aware. There is no deception in a bull-dog; it is only the cur that sneaks up and bites you when your back is turned.—*B. Bensly.*

25

PHARISAISM.

I. Its Contracted Sphere.

[11668] True religion has an outside as well as Pharisaism—an outside which differs from the latter not only in that it is more scriptural, but also in that it is broader, more complete. It may be narrower in a merely ritual direction, but, in all other respects, it is more extensive (Matt. v. 16; Titus ii. 14). The Pharisees, in losing internal piety, *narrowed* the field of external religion; they placed it altogether in ceremonial observances; in tithing, mint, anise, and cummin (which was a duty), and in other *uncommanded* rites, and ignored the weightier matters of the law (Matt. xxxiii. 23). They omitted not merely the internal graces of judgment, mercy, and faith, but the actions proceeding from these graces. The mark of a decaying church is not an external zeal for works, but a zeal for works in a contracted, often an uncommanded field, whilst the broad surrounding territory of Christian duty is left uncultivated.—*E. R. Craven.*

II. Its Source.

[11669] The pharisaical spirit, the love of outward and traditional things, hath afflicted every age, and afflicted this present age in no small degree; and I question whether, in this state, we shall ever have it extinguished. For there is an opinionativeness which seems almost inseparable from faith, and which yet is not of the essence of faith. If indeed our faith cometh from hearing of men, or from tradition, or from any other source than the fruits of the Spirit wrought in our heart and life, this dogmatism will continue to attend it; but if it spring from the proof of the thing, from the inbred conviction of its holy fruits, from the growth of heavenly temper, then that charity riseth up within the breast which thinketh no evil, is the death of all divisions and of all evil-speakings, and the true form of Christ's discipleship is manifested within us.—*Edward Irving.*

III. Contrast between the School of Christ and the School of the Pharisees.

[11670] In looking upon the outward, visible church, it hath always appeared to me divided into two classes—one which held Christ in all charitableness, and another which held Him in all uncharitableness; the former lying open to light, and trying every spirit with a kind experiment, and hoping the best, and hard to be convinced of evil—the latter, doubting and distrusting every one, weighing his every word with a critical exactness, and with all their ears listening to the report of evil; the former intelligible, by their simplicity and singleness of heart—the latter most confused and unapproachable, by reason of their bigotry to their church and favourite pastors, and their forms and other credentials; the former most soft and touching, by their tender pity of your frailties, and their kind counsels of your waywardness—the latter most repulsive by their firm and constrained fellowship, into which you can enter as a party only through the needle's eye of their prejudices. In the one class you will find the school of Christ, in the other the school of the Pharisees; and I do exhort those who listen to my unworthy exhortations to become of the former, Christians in heart.—*Ibid.*

IV. Question raised: How far Sincerity in Religion is Consistent with the Love of Publicity and the too Ardent Desire for Recognized Service.

[11671] Even in the public recognition of religious men there is a danger which ought to haunt the soul that is living for hereafter. Each man must ask himself, Is my reward being had now—is there any left to be given to me by and by by the hand of Christ? On the other hand, it does not follow that all good works rewarded now forfeit a reward hereafter, for He who said, "They have their reward," said also, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Some Christians have to act not merely in the view of God, but to set an example to men. This is true of rulers, of clergy, of parents, of landowners, of the masters of schools, of heads of families—these are all bound to works of mercy and self-denial, and are bound to let others see them. Yet all will be well for these too if they are sure of the purity of their intention to give the glory to God instead of to get glory from men. There is no harm in doing a kindness in public, in saying prayers in a great crowd if the publicity is put up with instead of being sought for, if the true intention be to do service to the Father which seeth in secret. Public notice is not fatal to loyalty to the precept, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," because God may imperatively require that man should confess Christ before men, and then the intention to glorify God transfigures the act just as a beautiful soul lights up an ugly countenance. What it comes to is this, that the good intention to serve God is the soul of the good act, just as an act which is good in its outward form may be utterly vitiated by its motive, and may resemble the man of whom tradition speaks, who was beautiful to look upon, and yet was possessed by a devil, who was fair and glorious in the eyes of men, and yet was dishonoured by having the trade-mark of the enemy upon him. The love of praise makes all worthless. It is only too easy now as it was eighteen centuries ago to enjoy the reward here and now, and to have no part in the expectation of future glory. On the other hand, a sincere desire to glorify God, although it cannot make an act such as murder, which is intrinsically bad, anything but what it is, it does make acts, which are in themselves trivial, of the highest value. A bit of paper, which by itself is worthless, when signed by a man of credit becomes a thousand pounds, and there are hundreds of acts of Christians which would be utterly insignificant, if the intention to glorify the all-glorious God in the infinite merits of the Lord Jesus Christ did not confer upon them a lustre altogether independent of their intrinsic worth.

26

SANCTIMONIOUSNESS.

I. Its Repulsiveness.

[11672] With many a bright child, many a high-minded youth, restive under Puritanical guardianship, it would seem, I fear, no bad news that the "godly" were ceasing (Psa. xii. 1); and his suppressed feeling would be that they could very well be spared. For the phrase has become appropriated to a type of character far from lovely in even its best aspects, and so adverse to natural joy and dreary in its idea of perfectness as to repel all large and genial minds.—*James Martineau.*

II. Its Ridiculousness.

[11673] My father, in speaking of the mannerisms which are affected by some who belong to a certain school of thought—the subdued air, the artificial tone, and other forms adopted as indications of sanctity—once said something that greatly impressed me: it was this, "Let us be natural until we are divine."—*Aitken.*

III. Its Underlying Error.

[11674] Men confound earnestness and solemnity. A man may be very much in earnest and not be very solemn; or he may be awfully solemn without a particle of earnestness. A solemn nothing is just as wicked as a witty nothing.—*Beecher.*

27

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.

I. Its Prevalence.

[11675] This is of all vices the most common, so deeply radicated in our nature, and so generally overspreading the world, that no man thoroughly is exempted from it, most men are greatly tainted with it, some are wholly possessed and acted by it.

II. Its Description.

[11676] Phidias, the great sculptor, was employed by the Athenians to make a statue of the goddess Diana, and he produced a *chef d'œuvre.* But the artist became enamoured of his own work, and was so anxious that his name should go down to posterity that he secretly engraved his name in one of the folds of the drapery; which, when the Athenians discovered, they indignantly banished the man who had polluted the sanctity of their goddess. So would self-righteous sinners act with the pure spotless robe of Him who knew no sin. Let them beware!—*Bowes.*

III. Its Definition.

[11677] Self-righteousness is the feeling that our character is such that we deserve well at the hands of God—a feeling common to all unconverted men; sinners wonder why they should be lost, but saints why they should be saved.—*A. Ritchie.*

IV. Its Connection with other Sins.

[11678] Self-righteousness is the root from which all other vices do grow, and without which hardly any sin could subsist; the chief vices especially have an obvious and evident dependence thereon.

V. Its Absolute Unprofitableness.

[11679] Self-righteousness is no righteousness.—*Hare.*

[11680] Self-righteousness is like bad debts, the more a man has the worse he is off.—*Seba Smith.*

VI. Its Folly.

[11681] You trust in your own doings to appease God for your sins, and to incline the heart of God to you. Though you are poor, worthless, vile, and polluted, yet you arrogantly take upon you that very work for which the Son of God became man, and in order to which God employed four thousand years in all the great dispensations of His providence, aiming chiefly to make way for Christ's coming to do this work. This is the work that you foolishly think yourselves sufficient for; as though your prayers and performances were excellent enough for this purpose. Consider how vain is the thought which you entertain of yourself; how much such arrogance appears in the sight of Christ, whom it cost so much! It was not to be obtained even by Him, so great and glorious a person, at a cheaper rate than His wading through a sea of blood, and passing through the midst of the furnace of God's wrath.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

[11682] A Chinese convert once said: "How can a man trust in his own righteousness? It is like seeking shelter in his own shadow: we may stoop to the very ground, and the lower we bend we still find that our shadow is beneath us. But if a man flee to the shadow of a great rock or a wide-spreading tree, he will find shelter from the noonday sun. That rock, that tree is Christ."—*Medhurst.*

VII. Its Dangers.

[11683] Many who have escaped the rocks of gross sins have been cast away on the sands of self-righteousness.—*Dyer.*

[11684] More have lost their own souls by thinking to carry some of their own stuff with them to heaven, which they, like lingering Lot, have been loth to leave, and have themselves perished.—*Gurnal.*

VIII. Its Fatal Consequences.

[11685] Any man who trusts so much as a single hair's breadth to his works is a lost soul. He who trusts to the least atom of works, though it be so small that he himself cannot discern it, will be lost.

[11686] Suppose it needful for you to cross a river over which two planks are thrown. One is new; the other rotten. How will you go? If you walk upon the rotten one, you are sure to fall into the river. If you put one foot on the rotten plank and the other on the new one, it will be just as bad; you will fall through and perish. The rotten plant is your own righteousness; the new, sound one is the righteousness which is of God through faith.

[11687] While a man rests in any degree on his own merits for acceptance with God, it is of little consequence whether he be a pagan idolater or a proud, ignorant Pharisee; both go about to establish their own righteousness; neither submits to righteousness of God; and I know not which of the two is more distant from the kingdom of God.—*Milner.*

IX. The Apparently Hopeless Condition of Respectable Self-righteous People.

[11688] In some of the most profligate places we have had some success; and where we chiefly fail is with your "pretty good sort of people" who do not see how they need to be made any better.—*Hannah More.*

X. Its Need to be laid aside.

1 Divine righteousness and self-righteousness are incongruous.

[11689] The beggarly robes of the first Adam must never be put on with the princely robe of the second Adam.—*Secker.*

2 Divine favour alone reserved for those who have an entirely opposite spirit.

[11690] The Lord takes none up but the forsaken, makes none healthy but the sick, gives sight to none but blind, brings none to life but the dead, sanctifies none but sinners and bestows wisdom upon none but the foolish.—*Martin Luther.*

XI. Contrast between the Thoughts of a Holy and a Self-righteous Being about Sinful Creatures.

[11691] Ah, there is nothing more beautiful than the difference between the thought about sinful creatures which is natural to a *holy* being, and the thought about sinful creatures which is

natural to a *self-righteous* being. The one is all contempt; the other, all pity.—*Alexander Maclaren.*

28

BLASPHEMY.

I. Its Definition.

[11692] Blasphemy consists in hurting the fame, good name, or reputation of another. The word is specially applied to anything said that expresses or implies what is greatly derogatory to the character or prerogative of God. . . . It means defamation, or calumniation, malicious evil-speaking; one of the most heinous and odious of sins.—*Morison.*

[11693] Blasphemy is an injury to God, by denying that which is due and belonging to Him, or attributing to Him what is not agreeable to His nature.—*Linwood.*

II. Its Heinousness.

[11694] In ignorance and unbelief the Pharisees might speak against the Son of Man, and yet not put themselves beyond the pale of mercy; but in the presence of that Divine Spirit and power in which He spake and acted, not only to ignore it, but to misrepresent and malign it, as these Pharisees had done, was to enter upon a path of wilful, perverse resistance to the Spirit of God, which, if pursued, would land the men who took and followed it in a guilt for which there would be no forgiveness, not because any kind or degree of guilt could exhaust the Divine mercy or exceed its power, but because the pursuers of such a path, sooner or later, would reach such a state of mind and heart and habit, that all chance or hope of their ever being disposed to fulfil, or capable of fulfilling, those conditions upon which alone mercy can be dispensed, would vanish away.—*Rev. W. Hanna, D.D.*

III. Its Aggravation.

[11695] The devil tempts thieves, libertines, and murderers with hope of gain, pleasure, or revenge; but the blasphemer serves him better than all, and without any wages.—*Lorenzo Dow.*

IV. The Universal Detestation in which this Sin should be held.

[11696] Since our discourse has now turned to the subject of blasphemy, I desire to ask one favour of you all, in return for this my address, and speaking with you, which is, that you will correct on my behalf the blasphemers of this city. And should you hear any one in the public thoroughfare, or in the midst of the forum, blaspheming God, reproach, rebuke Him; and should it be necessary to inflict blows, spare not to do so. Smite him on the face, strike his mouth; sanctify thy hand with the blow; and if any should accuse thee, and drag thee to the place of justice, follow them thither; and when the judge on the bench calls thee to account, say boldly that the man blasphemed the King of angels! For if it be necessary to punish those who blaspheme an earthly king, much more so those who treat Him contemptuously. It is a common crime, a public injury; and it is lawful for every one who is willing, to bring forward an accusation.—*St. John Chrysostom.*

29

IRREVERENCE.

I. Its Forms.

1 **Speaking with too great familiarity of sacred things.**

[11697] There is a class of people who sincerely mean to be religious and think they are so, who hold views of their relations to Deity which brings Him directly down into their affairs, and mixes Him up as a silent partner in all their emotions and acts. They speak of Him as though they knew all about Him, and with a frequency and glibness with which they would hardly dare to mention the name of any eminent man. They confound their thoughts with His thoughts, confuse their mixed impulses with His inspirations, and insensibly dwarf and degrade Him to their own dimensions and level, and thus destroy all reverence and disenchant the Divine name of all sanctity.

It is unfortunately true that there has been a great deal of irreligious talk about religious things, and much of the pious prattle of people who mean well enough is little better than profanation. There is a sense grandly true in which God is ever present in the world, and not a sparrow falls without His notice; in which in Him we live and move and have our being; and He is in us both to will and to do. But the grand meanings involved in these inspired and inspiring utterances are almost infinitely removed from the conception of the glib-tongued prattlers who, incapable of rising to such sublime heights of thought, drag all sacred things down to their own vulgar levels, and make them common if not unclean by a familiarity which breeds disgust. The perniciousness of profanity is its vulgarizing names that should never be uttered save with reverence and awe. The old monks, in their cloistered work on sacred manuscripts, wiped the pen and breathed an invocation before writing the name of the Most High.

II. Necessity of its Avoidance.

1 **In the outward posture during acts of worship.**

[11698] The genuflexions, circumflexions, processions, and prostrations may be ridiculed; but the opposite extreme of carelessness and

indifference is more profane, not less absurd, and equally injurious. Lawful acts of bodily homage are helpful to the devout mind, keeping alive the recollection of what we are, and whom we are addressing, and becoming the mind's own acts. They are of service also to others, a testimony, a lesson, and a pattern. We are justified in at least kneeling, not always, but as a rule, when we engage in prayer. Not always, but as a rule, we say. Standing is the most rational and scriptural exception. Stand or kneel, as judgment, emotion, and circumstance suggest. United worship requires uniformity. Let not some stand and others kneel, but all, who are well and strong, stand or kneel together in the congregation. From the beginning, Israelites and Gentiles knelt, and not only stood, before the Lord; and kneeling in prayer is a posture sanctioned by the strongest testimony of Scripture and church history. It was used in the temple of Jerusalem in united worship, and by pious Hebrews in their private religious engagements. The early Christians habitually knelt to pray.—*Robinson.*

[11699] God is Lord of my body also, and therefore challengeth as well reverent gestures as inward devotion. I will ever, in my prayers, either stand, as a servant before my Master, or kneel, as a subject, to my Prince.—*Bp. Hall.*

[11700] There are some things in which we may well envy the members of the Church of Rome: in nothing more than in the reverence which they feel for whatever has been consecrated to the service of their religion.—*Hare.*

2 In the use of the Divine name.

[11701] "Holy and reverend is His name" (Psa. iii. 9). The name or character of God is worthy of profoundest awe, for it is perfect and complete, whole or holy. It ought not to be spoken without solemn thought, or heard without profound homage. His name is to be trembled at, it is something terrible. He will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.—*Spurgeon.*

III. Lame Excuses for Irreverence.

1 Want of recollection is sometimes pleaded as an excuse for using the name of God with irreverence.

[11702] Want of recollection is sometimes pleaded as an excuse for using the name of God with irreverence; but the apology contains its own refutation. On such a subject, the very want of recollection argues a state of mind little moulded by right perceptions either of the finite or the infinite, and offering a strange contrast to the devout awe which prevented the ancient Egyptians from pronouncing at all the symbol of the supreme divinity. "Consider well," says Howell, "what a dangerous thing it is to tear in pieces that dreadful name which makes the vast fabric of the world to tremble; that holy name wherein the whole hierarchy of heaven doth triumph; that blissful name, wherein consists the fulness of all felicity." Such are the expressions, approaching to the sublime, of one who, mixing in courts and the ranks of fashion, esteemed it no degradation to be religious; and who, like the elder Humboldt of recent days, united to the accomplishments of a statesman those higher if not rarer qualities of thought and feeling which most ennoble the character of a man.—*W. Benton Clulow.*

IV. Its Pernicious Effects.

1 Destroys the influence of sacred words.

[11703] Men accustom themselves to such irreverence in the use of words that are sacred that at last they cease to be words of power to them.—*Beecher.*

2 Leads to apathy.

[11704] A great deal of the religious apathy of our day is the natural recoil of the heart from language about Deity and sacred things which shocks the sensibilities and makes piety seem akin to blasphemy.

3 Palsies our piety.

[11705] Unbelief comes oftener from irreverent association than an intellectual doubt. The sneer of a Voltaire has killed more than all his arguments. A jesting tone of talk on religious truths, a habit of reckless criticism on religious things, is to take the name of God in vain as truly as the vulgar oath; and when we hear him who calls himself a Christian, or a gentleman, indulging in burlesque of this sort, we at once recognize some moral defect in him. Intellect without reverence is the head of a man joined to a beast. There are many who think it a proof of wit; but it is the cheapest sort of wit, and shows as much lack of brains as of moral feeling. We would say it with emphasis to every Christian: Never indulge that habit, never allow sacred things to be jested at without rebuke; but keep them as you would the miniature of your mother, for no vulgar hands to touch. There is an anecdote of Boyle that he never pronounced the name of God without an audible pause. We need this reverence in the air of our social life, and its neglect will palsy our piety.

V. Homiletical Hints.

[11706] Irreverence arises from (1) Ignorance; (2) Want of thought; (3) Frivolity; (4) Flippancy; (5) Scepticism. It is (1) most unbecoming in creatures such as we; (2) most hateful in the sight of God; (3) injurious and ruinous to the soul. Leads to (1) profanity; (2) raillery; (3) blasphemy.

30

PRESUMPTION.

I. Its Nature, Constituent Elements, and Folly.

[11707] Presumption is a firework made up of pride and foolhardiness; it is indeed like a heavy house built upon slender crutches: like dust, when men throw against the wind, it flies back in their face, and makes them blind. Wise men presume nothing, but hope the best; presumption is hope out of her wits.—*S. Adams.*

[11708] Presumption is a violent passion of the will and an utter foe to prudence; it is that affection which thrusteth and exposeth the body to dangers, presuming only upon vain hope and imagination, without ground or reason.—*George Wishart.*

II. Its Phases.

1 The unwariness of youth.

[11709] The moth that plays around the flame and is burnt is the emblem of presumptuous and unwary youth.—*Thomas Aquinas.*

2 The self-righteous monopolizing of orthodoxy.

[11710] There is a sort of men who seem to be mighty zealous of religion; but their heart breaks out wholly in this way, that they fill the place wherever they are with noise and clamour, with dust and smoke. Nothing can be said in their presence, but instantly a controversy is started. Scarcely anybody is orthodox enough for them; for they spin so fine a thread, and have such cobweb divinity, that the least brush against it is not to be endured; and yet withal, they are as positive and decretal in their assertions that the Pope himself is nobody to them. One would think they were privy councillors of heaven, they define with so great confidence what will and what will not please God.—*Bp. Lightfoot.*

3 Distrusting the faithfulness of God to His own promises.

[11711] Presumption lies, not in hoping, but in distrusting. How can *you* be so presumptuous as to doubt the faithfulness of Him who cannot lie! How can *you* be so presumptuous as to suppose that He knew not all the peculiarities of *your* case when He said, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out!"—*J. H. Evans.*

4 The improper dealing with Divine truth.

[11712] To dare to believe less, or to pretend to understand more, than God has expressly revealed, is equally profane presumption.—*Abp. Whately.*

III. Its Fatally Progressive Character.

[11713] Presumption never stops in its first attempt; he that wades so far as to wet and foul himself, cares not how much he trashes farther.—*R. South.*

IV. Its instinctively acknowledged Enormity.

[11714] Presumption is the mother of all vices, and is like unto a great fire, which maketh every one to retire back.—*St. Augustine.*

V. Its Final Stage.

[11715] This is reached when, to the clearest knowledge of the greatness of our sin, and to the most elaborate and carefully contrived schemes for effecting it, there is added the resoluteness of obstinacy—a dogged and persevering stubbornness in getting our own way, even though, in addition to all the remonstrances of conscience and the Holy Spirit of God, all the aspects of God's Providence are against us—frowning us back every step we take. A striking illustration of this form of presumption we have in the history of Balaam. We see there a man intent on a scheme for his own aggrandisement. God opposed that scheme. The man keeps tampering with his conscience to get leave to do a wrong thing, till at last God in anger gives him leave. But no sooner does this bad man set out than the frown of God meets him. A mysterious power drives him back. His foot is crushed. His ass falls. Before his opened eyes stands the angel of God, telling him his way is a perverse way, and yet, after a few hollow professions of contrition, he determines to go on. So it is that the transgressor "holdeth fast his iniquity," and will not let it go. He would break a lance even with an angel in the path of the vineyards. Oh! how often does God make it difficult for us to find opportunities for our besetting sin. The farther we go the more we find our way hedged up with thorns. The difficulties grow upon us like a waking nightmare. And yet with a madness that knows no control, and a hardihood that braves all consequences, we rush upon the thick bosses of the Almighty, and, in an attitude of defiant presumption, stretch out our hands against God.—*Daniel Moore, M.A.*

31

PROFANITY.

I. Derivation and Meaning of the Term.

[11716] Profane means in front of the fane or temple. The ground inside a church is sacred, but that outside is profane in the right sense of the word. A profaner is one whose whole life

is like an open road, caring for nothing sacred—such an one was Esau. Profane now means given to swearing. A swearer is one of the worst and most foolish of Esaus.—*Wells.*

II. Various Forms of Profanity.

1 Turning the temple of God into a market.

[11717] Is there a distinct line which divides what we call the sacred from the secular? Is it not rather that in God's sight the line is only drawn between things good and evil? Is it that there is evil in merchandize? must the market-place be the devil's temple? may not the very bringing it within the temple courts consecrate it? Now there is much truth in these suggestions. The real line drawn by God is that which divides not the church from the market, not the sacred from the secular, but the house of God from the temple of Mammon, the house of merchandize from the den of thieves, the service of God from the service of the devil, the upright, honest trader from the tricks of the fraudulent speculator. We allow all this, because, to speak strictly, no one spot on God's earth is more sacred than another, inasmuch as the whole earth is His footstool, and everywhere is His presence found. Yet that sense of propriety and fitness which protests against the mingling of things sacred and secular is no prejudice or bigotry. We must keep these things apart; we cannot run the risk of mingling them, at all events in our imperfect sinful state. To us there will always be irreverence in bringing merchandize into our Father's house; for the effect will be not to elevate the secular, but to debase the sacred; not to consecrate the market, but to profane the temple.—*R. F. L. Blunt.*

2 The turning "the house of prayer into a den of thieves."

[11718] That is the profaneness which not only mingles the secular with the sacred, but substitutes the evil for the sacred. This sin is ours not only when worldly thoughts intrude themselves into our worship, and the anxieties of the shop, the market, and the exchange distract our hearts while engaged in Divine service, but when evil, covetous, unholy, envious, uncharitable, censorious, unbelieving thoughts and imaginations here, within these courts, destroy, pollute our hearts, and therefore interrupt, profane our worship. Then, indeed, the Father's house has passed from "the house of merchandize into a den of thieves."—*Ibid.*

III. Its Source.

[11719] "It might puzzle a philosopher," says Ogden, "to trace the love of swearing to its original principle, and assign its place in the constitution of man. Is it a passion, or an appetite, or an instinct? What is its just measure, its proper object, its ultimate end? Or shall we conclude that it is entirely the work of art? a vice which men have invented for themselves without prospect of pleasure or profit, and to which there is no imaginable temptation in nature? If it be an accomplishment, it is such an one as the meanest person may make himself master of; requiring neither rank nor fortune, neither genius nor learning."

[11720] There are some sins which are so perfectly gratuitous that it is difficult to account for their existence, except on the supposition that they are prompted by a malignant being. As an instance, oaths and imprecations in common speech are either the dictate of Satan or of Satanic love of sin as sin. They are committed directly against God, and have no meaning, no use in any other point of view.—*Dr. W. K. Tweedy.*

IV. Its Malignity.

[11721] This is a mighty evil. If the soul has not reverence, what has it? It has no depth of feeling, no balance of faculties, no true idea of life, no substratum of goodness. It has no virility. It is volatile and weak. It lacks sympathetic connection with the great Fountain of energy and peace. It moves through life, not like the imperial bird in the atmosphere, pursuing its sunward path, and, however the winds may blow, soaring onward and upward through massive clouds; but, like the loose feather, it is the sport of every wind; it gyrates, but cannot fly.

[11722] Chrysostom, in some sixteen continued homilies, if not more, whatsoever his text was, always concluded by a solemn warning against swearing, so deeply did he feel the malignity of the sin. And when some pleaded custom, he said, "If you would but punish it thus, that the servant and child that swore an oath should not dine that day, you would go far to put a stop to it; yet, saith he, the command of God is less efficacious!"

V. Its Connection with Lying.

[11723] He that swears commonly, it cannot be avoided but sometimes he may swear more than is true; as where much water runs, some gravel or mud will pass along with the water; so where there is much swearing, some lies will run along with the oaths.

VI. Dissuasives against this Sin.

[11724] Profane swearing is one of the greatest of all sins. And so certainly it is. It is a direct insult on Almighty God, a daring affront to His supreme majesty, an insolent defiance of His justice and power, and a wanton trifling with one's own salvation.—*Joseph Lathrop.*

[11725] It is a complication of many sins, such as impiety to God and contempt of His authority; the abuse of speech, that distinguishing faculty of man, unbelief in heart, a

disregard to, if not a real disbelief of the providence, word, and judgment of God. In perjury there is always falsehood and injustice, and often higher crimes; there may be murder. In the lower kinds of profaneness there is levity, passion, indecency, rudeness, and brutality of manners.—*Ibid.*

[11726] Profane language is a sure evidence of a bad disposition of mind. It proceeds from a stupid, atheistical heart, or from some malignant feeling.—*Ibid.*

[11727] It tends to produce still greater hardness, to extinguish all reverence for God and sacred things, and thus to introduce all other sins.—*Ibid.*

[11728] It is of all sins the most pernicious in its consequences. Common profaneness leads to perjury, and thus weakens the social security which depends much on the efficacy of oaths.—*Ibid.*

[11729] Profaneness, though unreasonable and without apparent temptation, is yet exceedingly infectious. By this one sinner destroys much good.—*Ibid.*

[11730] The profane swearer is heaping guilt on his soul. If for every idle word which men speak they must give an account, how heavy will be the account, and how awful the punishment of that man who daily multiplies his impious and profane words!—*Ibid.*

[11731] The case of such a man is the more dangerous, because he defeats the means of repentance. What avails it to tell a man of the wrath of God, when he has banished the fear of God from his mind? What avails it to tell him of death, judgment, and damnation, when he can familiarly imprecate these on himself and others? What avails it to tell him of the evil and danger of this sin, when he can make a mock of *all* sin?—*Ibid.*

[11732] He who can trifle with the name and perfections of God can as easily laugh at reproof and admonition. Some great distress and imminent danger may perhaps bring him to consideration, but the calm methods of reason, argument, and persuasion will have no effect, in his ordinary state, because he has fortified himself against them. The peculiar dangers of such sinners the apostle more than intimates, when he says, "above all things swear not, lest ye fall into condemnation."—*Ibid.*

[11733] God has declared that He will not hold such persons guiltless, that He will be a swift witness against them, that He will send His curse upon them here, and execute distinguished punishment upon them hereafter.—*Ibid.*

[11734] Let those who have accustomed themselves to this sin, consider the guilt they are bringing on their own souls, and the irreparable mischief they are doing to the souls of others. Or if these considerations are too grave and serious, at least let them consider how much better they would be esteemed, and how much more useful they would be in the world, if they would lay aside their impiety, and use only that sober, graceful, and sound speech which cannot be condemned.—*Ibid.*

VII. Its Remedy.

[11735] It is the universal presence of God which we must ever remember and realize, if we would believe in Him aright and learn any true thoughts of reverence before Him. Every place, every time, everything is holy, because the Holy God is everywhere.

"Where'er we seek Thee Thou art found,
And every place is hallowed ground."

It is the thought that we are approaching Him and He is waiting to bless us which makes us honour His house, His day, His word, His sacraments: it is the thought that His house is a token and pledge that our houses are all holy; His day, that all days are to be consecrated; His word, that all good books He has, in proportion to their truth, inspired: His sacrament, that every meal may be a feast of fellowship with Him—it is this which will teach us the right ground of reverence; this will prevent us from bisecting our lives into the religious side and the secular; this will make every act, every word, every thought dedicated, holy, consecrated to Him.—*R. F. L. Blunt.*

VIII. Homiletical Hints.

[11736] I. Men swear by God in a manner which shocks and wounds the feelings of all true Christians. II. They thus violate the law of good society. III. Moreover they do this uselessly; no one adds force to his words by profanity. IV. They break God's law and violate their best moral instincts. V. They expose themselves to the displeasure of Him who will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. Conclusion, 1. Do not copy this evil and prevalent example even from your superiors. 2. If you have contracted it, give it up.

32

SACRILEGE AND MISUSE OF SCRIPTURE.

I. Historical Illustrations of the Positive Misuse of Scripture, for the Infliction of Actual Wrong upon the Well-being of Men.

[11737] On misapplications of "Honour the king" have been built the ruinous opposition to national freedom; on misapplications of "Tu es Petrus" the colossal usurpations of Papal tyranny; on misapplications of "Cursed be Canaan" the shameful iniquities of the slave

trade ; on misapplications of "Compel them to come in" the hideous crimes of the Inquisition ; on misapplications of "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" the infuriated butchery of thousands of wretched women.—*Archdeacon Farrar.*

[11738] When Ravaillac stabbed Henri IV. the Jesuits were ready to applaud and defend him by the example of Ehud; and the so-called Popish plot was a not unnatural Nemesis on the sanction which from time to time had been accorded in the name of Scripture to an Anthony Babington, a Jacques Clement, and an Everard Digby.—*Ibid.*

II. Practical and Personal Illustrations of Sacrilege.

[11739] With what jealousy must that same Son of God behold thee as He gazes into thy desecrated heart, as He beholds that polluted temple, as He sees His great foe enthroned, as it were, upon the altar and worshipped day by day.—*Aitken.*

III. The Punishment of Sacrilege.

[11740] The Spirit of God will not endure to to have holy things profaned as if they were common or unclean. Belshazzar converted the consecrated vessels of the temple into instruments of luxury and intemperance ; but the Lord tempered his wine with dregs, and made them prove unto him as cups of trembling and astonishment. Herod polluted the sepulchres of the saints with a sacrilegious search for treasures, presumed to have been there hidden, and God made fire rise out of the earth to devour the over-busy searchers. Antiochus ransacked the temple of the Lord, Heliodorus emptied the treasures of their consecrated moneys ; Pompey defiled the Sabbath and the sanctuary ; Crassus robbed the house of God of ten thousand talents. But inquire into the event of these insolences ; and we shall find that true then, of which later ages have given many examples and are still likely to give more, that stolen bread hath gravel in it to choke those that devour it—that ruin is ever the child of sacrilege—that mischief setteth a period to the lives and designs of profane men.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

33

SCOFFING.

I. Its Causes and Sources.

[11741] (1) The poverty of wit, or (2) of some wit but no wisdom. (3) Extreme weakness and folly. (4) A corrupt and depraved disposition. —*C. N.*

II. Its Developments.

[11742] (1) A contempt of everything that carries on it a Divine impression, or (2) an obstinate neglect of any of those ordinances which the wisdom of God has appointed to support and preserve His religion in this world.

III. Its Unreasonableness.

[11743] Religion and virtue, in all their forms, either of doctrine or of precept—of piety towards God, integrity towards men, or regularity in private life—are so far from affording any ground of ridicule to the petulant, that they are entitled to our highest veneration. They are names which should never be mentioned but with the utmost honour.—*Dr. Blair.*

[11744] It is said in Scripture, "fools make a mock at sin." They had better make a mock at pestilence, at war, or famine. With one who would choose these public calamities for the subject of his sport you would not be inclined to associate ; you would fly from him as worse than a fool, as a man of distempered mind. Yet certain it is that, to the great society of mankind, sin is a greater calamity than pestilence, or famine, or war ; therefore never sit in the seat of the scorner.—*Ibid.*

IV. Its Guilt.

[11745] There have been many punished for clipping of coin ; of how much sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy who clip the names of God's people to make them weigh lighter.—*J. Watson.*

V. The Indefensibleness of Scoffers when Challenged.

[11746] To a man who had just been scoffing at Christianity in a brilliant assembly, Dr. Belknap said, "Well, sir, have you found a religion that is better?" The scoffer was obliged to confess that thus far he had not. "Well," responded the doctor, "when you do, let me know, and I will join you in adopting it."

34

SWEARING.

I. Its Sinfulness and Folly.

2 Nothing is so low, vulgar, or wicked as this habit.

[11747] There is nothing so low, vulgar, and wicked as swearing, and it is surprising that men who wish to be considered as wise and polite should be found so much in the habit of it : it is not, however, peculiar to the inferior circles of life, but prevails among the great and honourable, so called.—*C. Buck.*

2 It is of all vices the most inexcusable.

[11748] Is there a God to swear by, and is there none in whom to believe, none to whom to pray?—*Prierio.*

3 It is a superfluity of naughtiness.

[11749] Swearing is properly a superfluity of

naughtiness, and can only be considered as a sort of pepper-corn rent, in acknowledgment of the devil's right of superiority.—*R. Hall.*

4 It is an unmanly and silly vice.

[11750] Swearing is an unmanly and silly vice; it certainly is not a grace in conversation, as it adds no strength to it. There is no organic symmetry in the narrative which is ingrained with oaths; and the blasphemy which bolsters an opinion does not make it any more correct; nay the use of profane oaths argues a limited range of ideas, and if we can find no other phrases through which to vent our choking passion, we had better suppress that passion. —*E. H. Chapin.*

II. Its Source.

1 It springs from a mere malignancy of spirit in man against God.

[11751] Swearing is a sin that hath no more malignancy in it against God, by how much the less is the temptation to it. I verily believe that if God had not made the third commandment, there would never have been so many oaths in the world; but it springs from a mere malignancy of spirit in man against God, because He has forbidden it, for no profit can arise from the practice.—*J. Burroughes.*

III. Its Degradation.

[11752] It is no mark of a gentleman to swear. The most worthless and vile, the refuse of mankind, the drunkard and the prostitute, swear as well as the best dressed and educated gentleman. No particular endowments are requisite to give a finish to the art of cursing. The basest and meanest of mankind swear with as much tact and skill as the most refined; and he that wishes to degrade himself to the very lowest level of pollution and shame should learn to be a common swearer. Any man has talents enough to learn to curse God, and imprecate perdition on themselves and their fellow-men. Profane swearing never did any man any good. No man is the richer or wiser or happier for it. It helps no one's education or manners. It commends no one to any society. It is disgusting to the refined, abominable to the good, insulting to those with whom we associate, degrading to the mind, unprofitable, needless, and injurious to society; and wantonly to profane His name, to call His vengeance down, to curse Him, and to invoke His vengeance, is perhaps of all offences the most awful in the sight of God.—*Louth.*

IV. Its Evidence.

1 It is an admission that our bare word is not worthy of credit.

[11753] Common swearing, if it have any meaning at all, argues in man a perpetual distrust of his own reputation, and is an acknowledgment that he thinks his bare word not to be worthy of credit; and it is so far from adorning and filling a man's discourse that it makes it look swollen and bloated, and more bold and blustering than becomes persons of genteel and good breeding.—*Tillotson.*

V. Special Heinousness of Swearing by the Saviour's Name.

[11754] Who is this Jesus Christ that I hear men swearing by? Who is He? Some destroyer, that they so treat His name? What foul thing hath He done, that our great cities speak His name in thousand-voiced jeer and contempt? Who is He? A Lamb, whose blood simmered in the fires of sacrifice to save you. A Brother, who put down His crown of glory that you might take it up. For many years He has been striving night and day to win your affections. There is nothing in heaven that He is not willing to give you; never had a sickness but that He was sorry for you. He has brooded over you with wings of love. He has tried to press you to His heart of kindness and compassion. He wants to forgive you. He wants to help you. He wants to make you happy.

VI. The Connection between Swearing vainly and Swearing falsely.

[11755] He that makes no conscience of swearing vainly will soon make but little of swearing falsely; for he that in a lower degree so voluntarily breaks God's commandment for nothing, may soon be drawn to break it in a little higher degree for his profit.—*R. Boyle.*

35

ADDING TO THE DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL.

I. Forms of this Sin.

1 Biblical eclecticism.

[11756] Clemens Alexandrinus observes of the heretics in his days, that they would quote the Scriptures indeed, but not in the sense which the context required, but would take here and there a word, and apply it to their own private opinions, not considering what is signified by it (ἀλλ' ἀυτῇ ψιλῇ ἀποχρώμενοι τῇ λέγει), but abusing the naked word itself by putting what sense they please upon it. The same may be observed of many in our days.—*Bp. Beveridge,* 1638–1708.

2 Spiritual cynicism.

[11757] There is no inevitable connection between Christianity and cynicism. Truth is not a salad, is it, that you must always dress it with vinegar?—*Wm. M. Punshon.*

3 Religious fustianism.

[11758] The man who is really in earnest,

who has real faith in what he is saying and doing, will not be noisy and loud, and in a hurry, as it is written, "He that believeth will not make haste." He that is really strong, he who knows that he can do his work, if he takes his time and uses his wit, and God prospers him—he will not be violent, but will work on in silence and peaceful industry, as it is written, "Their strength is to sit still." But if you go into great towns you will hear much noisy and violent speaking from pulpits, and at public meetings. You will read much noisy and violent writing in newspapers and books. Now I say to you, distrust such talk. It may seem to you very earnest and passionate. Distrust it for that very reason. It may seem to you very eloquent and full of fine words. Distrust it for that very reason. The man who cannot tell his history without wrapping it up in fine words, generally does not know what he is talking about. The man who cannot speak or write without scolding or exaggeration, is not very likely to be able to give sound advice to his fellow-men.—*Charles Kingsley.*

II. Its Unconscious Manifestation.

1 Over-sensitiveness when engaged in religious discussion.

[11759] Truth is tough. It will not break like a bubble at a touch; nay, you may kick it about all day like a football, and it will be round and full at evening. . . . I never heard that a mathematician was alarmed for the safety of a demonstrated proposition. I think generally that fear of open discussion implies feebleness of inward conviction; and great sensitiveness to the expression of individual opinion is a mark of weakness.—*O. W. Holmes.*

III. Its Dangers.

1 Its growth is insidious.

[11760] He who but partially pares away the image on a royal coin vitiates the whole; so he who swerves ever so little from the pure faith, soon proceeds from this to graver errors, and becomes entirely corrupted.—*St. Chrysostom.*

2 Its practice is especially mischievous on account of the interdependency of Scripture.

[11761] It is perilous to tamper with a chart. Those parts which may be of little importance to one captain may be of the highest importance to another.

3 Its punishment is certain.

[11762] Let the school of Hermogenes show that it is written; if it is not written, let them fear the woe that is in store for those who add or take away.—*Tertullian.*

IV. Corollary to be drawn from the Fact that Addition to, or Subtraction from, the Truths of Scripture is a Sin.

1 That the Holy Scriptures contain in themselves all that is necessary to salvation.

[11763] It being so expressly forbidden to add anything to or to take anything from the Holy Scriptures, it follows that the Holy Scriptures do in themselves contain all things necessary to salvation. For otherwise, if there should be anything necessary to salvation, and yet not contained in the Scriptures, certainly it can be no sin, but rather a duty, to add it to the Scriptures, or to the articles of faith delivered in the Scriptures, this being the end and scope of the Scriptures, to show us all things that belong to our eternal salvation. And so if there be any article of faith which God requires assent to from us, that Himself hath not revealed in the Holy Scriptures to us, that article of faith must either be added to the Holy Scriptures, or we can never be saved; yes, to look after salvation God hath commanded us, but to add anything to the Scriptures He hath forbidden us; and therefore all things requisite to salvation must needs be contained in the Scriptures, to which we need to add nothing as an article of faith in order to our salvation.—*Bp. Beveridge*, 1658–1708.

V. Homiletical Hints.

[11764] I. Its *source*: (1) By parties for party purposes; (2) by individuals for personal gain or safety. II. Its *evil*: It is (1) an interference with Divine prerogative; (2) presumptuous setting up of human against Divine wisdom. III. Its *consequences*: If one may add, all may.

36

PREACHING ANOTHER GOSPEL.

I. The Uselessness of preaching another Gospel.

[11765] Plenty of people come to a mission to hear a new gospel. I have seen the old gospel do a great many wonderful things. I have seen it transform character; I have seen it raise men from the lowest dregs of society and make them earnest and useful members of it. But I have never seen a new gospel do anything for any man.—*Aitken.*

II. Warning against misconstruing, through Incompetency and Idleness, the Prohibition to preach another Gospel.

[11766] Alas for us if we substitute anything

for old scriptural Christianity; but alas for us also if through incompetency, supineness, and indifference, we fail to make new, close, and pungent application of the truths of the gospel to the immediate condition of the people of our day, and to the ever-changing circumstances of those around us.—*Dr. Somerville.*

37

RESTLESSNESS.

I. Its Description.

[11767] A restless mind means (1) a fickle heart (2) and unhappy heart, which vainly seeks where it cannot be found something it has forfeited and lost, or something of happiness which is either imaginary or which is the sole property of the constant and quiet.—*C. N.*

II. Its Unproductiveness.

[11768] St. Francis de Sales did not think well of those men who flit from book to book, taking up first one religious exercise and then another; he compared such persons to the drone bee, which makes no honey. "Always learning, yet never coming to the knowledge of the truth: always gathering and acquiring, without retaining anything, because what they gather is put into a bottomless sack, a broken cistern. The longer a bee rests upon the flower the more honey it will gather," he used to say.

III. Its Impropriety.

[11769] Tell me, my soul, why art thou restless? Why dost thou look forward to the future with such strong desire? The present is thine—and the past and the future shall be.—*Longfellow.*

IV. Its Ridiculousness.

[11770] An anxious, restless temper that runs to meet care on its way, that regrets lost opportunities too much, and that is over-painstaking in contrivances for happiness, is foolish, and should not be indulged.—*T. Sharpe.*

V. Its Infelicity.

[11771] A restless mind, like a rolling stone, gathers nothing but dirt or mire, and it is sure to leave peace and quietness behind it.—*T. Balguy.*

38

SELFISHNESS.

I. The Philology of the Word Itself.

[11772] It is a singular fact that the words "selfish" and "selfishness" should be of comparatively recent introduction into the English language. They are little more than two hundred years old, and were quite unknown to Shakespeare and the writers of his time. They first make their appearance in the writings of some of the Puritan divines towards the middle of the seventeenth century, and were remarked on, sometimes condemned as novelties, at the time of their first employment. I say it is a singular fact that the words should be so new, seeing that the thing is so old. Selfishness, or the undue love of self, is as old as sin, is as old as the fall, or indeed as old as the devil. I called it just now the undue love of self. Perhaps I should have called it rather, the love of our wrong self. There is a self belonging to us, and that our true self, which it is our duty to love, as is plain from that precept of Christ, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"—seeing that in this precept the love of self is made the rule, measure, and law of our love to our brethren; which it could not be, if it were itself a condemnable thing.—*Abp. Trench.*

II. Its Definition.

[11773] Selfishness includes *all* sin in one sense. The two words are properly, and in their ultimate grounds, exactly coextensive with one another. But while in absolute strictness of speech this is so, selfishness in our common acceptation of the word occupies a somewhat narrower domain. It expresses all those undue preferences of self, of that meaner self whereof I just spoke, which display a manifest indifference for the feelings, the interests, or the safety of others; and to the end that my subject may not lose itself in infinite space, it is of selfishness in this its common and narrower acceptation that I desire to say something before we part. —*Ibid.*

[11774] The weakness of the social affection and the strength of the private desires constitute selfishness.—*J. Mackintosh.*

III. Its Description.

[11775] The ant is a type of selfishness in that it works purely for itself; the bee is a type of beneficence, because it works for the good of others.—*J. Bate.*

[11776] The selfish man in business consults his own gains, regardless of the losses he may bring upon others: the selfish politician consults his ambitious schemes, regardless of the public good; hence selfish desire is always wrong.—*H. Winslow.*

IV. Its Subterfuges.

[11777] It is recorded of an architect of the name of Cnidus, that having built a watch-tower for the king of Egypt, to warn mariners from certain dangerous rocks, he caused his own name to be engraved in large letters on a stone in the wall, and then having covered it

with plaster, he inscribed on the outside, in golden letters, the name of the king of Egypt, as though the thing were done for his glory. He was cunning enough to know that the waves would ere long wear away the coat of plastering, and that then his own name would appear, and his memory be handed down to successive generations. How many are there who, whilst affecting to seek only the glory of God and His church, are really seeking whatever is calculated to gratify self-love. Could the outer coat of their pretences be removed, we should see them as they really are, desirous not of God's glory, but of their own.—*Abp. Trench.*

V. ITS BANEFULNESS.

[11778] Where selfishness wholly rules the mind, we do not recognize the noblest and most perfect model of human nature.—*Mrs. Willard.*

[11779] The selfish man believes that by closing his heart against his fellows, and centring in self every thought and feeling, he escapes much suffering; but his egotistical calculations are invariably defeated; for his contracted sympathies being all directed to one focus, he aggravates the ills he endures, that he expends on self alone more painful pity than the most enthusiastic philanthropist devotes to mankind.—*Lady Blessington.*

[11780] The man who is a slave to selfishness could look calmly on the wreck of nature and the crush of worlds, if it would add one item to his wealth. Haggard poverty he spurns from his door; the favours of fortune he receives as obligations paid. He is tormented with envy, withered with covetousness, and pained with jealousy, he renders himself miserable, knows nothing of the sweets of enjoyment, incurs the scorn and contempt of those around him, and is worse than a blank in the community.—*L. C. Judson.*

VI. ITS CORRUPT GENERATING POWER.

[11781] Selfishness is the chief spring of injustice, for from hence it is that oftentimes men regard not what courses they take, what means they use, how unjust, how base soever they be, toward the compassing their designs; they trample upon right, violate all laws of conscience; they falsify their trust, betray their friends, supplant their neighbour, detract from the virtue and worth of any man, forge and vent odious slanders, and commit any sort of wrong and outrage; without regard or remorse they do anything which seemeth to further their design.—*I. Barrow.*

VII. PERSONAL TEST AND SELF-EXAMINATION INCULCATED WITH RESPECT TO THIS SIN.

[11782] Do not let us wait for great and signal opportunities of showing that we can prefer the good of others to our own. Such occur very seldom; while small occasions occur every day in the bosom of our family, in our daily intercourse with the world; and moreover, strange as this may sound, the great occasions are not nearly so good a test of our sincerity as the small. Great acts of self-sacrifice attract observation, are talked about, often bring honour, credit, glory to the doer. A thousand mixed motives may impel us to these; but the smaller acts in which we yield our will to the will of others, postpone our convenience, our pleasure, our ease, to theirs, these, unobserved by the world, often unobserved even by the person on whose behalf they are done, these are a far truer test. Let us then, every one, ask ourselves at once such questions as these, Am I shifting off upon some other a burden which I ought to bear? Do I habitually inflict large inconvenience and toil upon others for the sake of some trifling convenience or pleasure which may accrue to myself? What is the distribution of my time, what of my money? Is it a selfish one? Is self the centre round which I seek to make that little world in which I move, so far as in me lies, to revolve? Do I live in habitual disregard of the apostle's precept, "Look not every man on his own things, but also on the things of others?" And oh! remember the danger which lies so near us in such a self-examination as this, lest while we are sharpsighted as eagles to see the motes in the eyes of our brethren, we should be blind as moles to see the beam in our own.—*Abp. Trench.*

39

ANTICIPATION OF EVIL.

I. THE COMMONNESS OF THIS FAULT.

[11783] I think that human life is much like road life. You stand on a hill, and look down and across the valley, and another prodigious hill lifts itself upon the other side. The day is hot, your horse is weary, and you are tired; and it seems to you that you cannot climb that long hill. But you had better trot down the hill you are on, and not trouble yourself about the other one. You find the valley pleasant and inspiriting. When you get across it, you meet only a slight ascent, and begin to wonder where the steep hill is which you saw. You drive along briskly, and when you reach the highest point, you find that there has not been an inch of the hill over which you have not trotted. You see that it was illusory. The slight ascent looked almost like a perpendicular steep; but when you come to pass over it, step by step, you find it to be a good travelling road.

So it is with your troubles. Just in that way your anticipations of mischiefs hang before you; and when you come to where they are, you find them to be all smooth turnpikes. Men ought to be ashamed, after they have done that two or three times, not to take the hint, and profit

by it; yet they will not. They will suffer from anticipated troubles just as much as though they had no such experience. They have not wit enough to make use of the lesson which their life is continually teaching them; namely, that a large majority of the troubles which they worry themselves about beforehand either never come or are easily borne. They form a habit of fretting about future troubles. It was not the old monks alone who wore sackcloth and hair shirts: you wear them as much as they did; only you wear them inside, while they wore them outside—you wear them in your heart, they wore them on their skins. They were wiser than you are.—*Beecher.*

[11784] The world is full of men and women who are full of foreboding. The merchant apprehensive of failure in business; the labourer out of work, with a family dependent upon him; clerk likely to lose his situation; mother dreads the issue of the illness of her child, &c. Sometimes the fact reveals itself in the face; oftener these fears are hidden in the heart.

II. Arguments against this Fault.

1 The uselessness of such conduct.

[11785] There are two things, says the old proverb, about which you should not distress yourself; first, things which you can help, and second, things which you cannot help. If you can help it, why don't you? If you cannot, why fret. You may as well give in first as last.—*Talmage.*

2 The folly of such couduct.

[11786] The folly of foreboding (Matt. vi. 25-34). 1. It is needless (vers. 25-30). 2. It is unchristian, heathenish—"after all these things do the Gentiles seek" (vers. 31-33). 3. It is useless (ver. 34). Every day will bring its own burden, however much we dread it and anticipate it.—*M. Braithwaite.*

[11787] To be always fearing for the future is to take things into our own hands, and then we cannot expect God's help. . . . It is good advice though hard to practice, "Never cross a bridge before you come to it."

[11788] Sufficient unto the day is the evil that properly belongs to it. Do not drag the future into the present. Do not add to-morrow's evil to to-day's. We have always strength to bear the evil when it comes. We have not always strength to bear the foreboding of it.—*Maclaren.*

[11789] Many a desponding prophecy is falsified by events most blessed. We write bitter things, and God blots them out and writes gracious things in lieu thereof. Many a gloomy vaticinator might save himself his depression of spirit if he would remember that "the Lord reigneth," and "He will speak peace unto His people."—*Spurgeon.*

[11790] Example—Jacob (Gen. xlii. 36). All these things, &c. So thinks poor unbelief in the dark hour. But stay! *Were* all things against him? They were working for his good. He was at the very dawn of his brightest day. —*Bowes* (*adapted*).

3 The misery of such conduct.

[11791] An Eastern proverb says: "He is miserable once who feels it, but twice who fears it before it comes."

4 The wisdom and blessedness of the opposite course.

[11792] Hope lieth at the bottom of the worst condition that can be. The poor (saith Job's friend) hath hope, and the rich can have no more, the future being equally close to both; the one can have no greater assurance to keep what he hath than the other hath to get what he needeth; yea clearly the poor hath the advantage in the case, for God hath more declared that He will relieve the poor man's want than that He will preserve the rich man's store. If then we have in every condition a hope present to us, why do we grieve as those who have no hope? having ever ready the best anchor that can be to rest upon (for in this rolling sea of human affairs there is no firmer anchor than hope), why do we let our minds be tossed with discontented solicitudes and fears? Why do we not rather (as the apostle enjoineth) rejoice in hope than grieve out of despair? Why do we not, as the prophet adviseth, hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord? The effect of so reposing ourselves for the future on God's providence would be perfect content and peace, according to that of the prophet, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." And that of the wise man, "A patient man will bear for a time, and afterwards joy shall spring up unto him."—*I. Barrow.*

[11793] Look not mournfully into the past, it comes not back again; wisely improve the present, it is thine; and go forth into the shadowy future with a manly heart and without fear.

III. The Method of quieting the Heart when tempted to commit this Sin.

[11794] First it may be thou art too hasty in this kind; many times thou thinkest in such cases that thou art without help and without hope, when it is not so. Know, therefore, that a man may be under water and rise again, he may sink twice or thrice before he be drowned; thou mayest receive many foils, many blows, and yet not lose the victory. The best saints have been under the cloud for a great while, but they were not destroyed, they perished not. So was Joseph, so was David, so were all. Therefore put the case that thou fall into the particular ill, that the evil which thou fearest fall upon thee; cast not away thy confidence;

God may help thee; He may come between the cup and the lip, as often it is seen. It is His usual manner to appear in the mount, and not before.

40

BORROWING OF TROUBLE.

I. Its Folly.

1 Anticipated evil tries to do to-morrow's work to-day.

[11795] How inconsistent we are! Do we try to eat and drink for to-morrow? Do we dress for to-morrow? No. Yet we try to bear the troubles of to-morrow as well as those already with us. Nothing can be more foolish, hurtful, sinful.—*Homilist.*

[11796] A foolish pendulum once stopped, nor could it be induced to start again till it was reminded that though it *would* have so many times to tick in the whole year, it would have the whole year to do it in, and was only required to do the hour's work in the hour. The burdens men lay upon themselves by trying to do to-morrow's work to-day! Take care of the minutes, and the hours will take care of themselves.

2 Anticipated evil will probably never happen after all.

[11797] We are pitiful prophets. Our calculations are often sadly beside the mark. The evils that we fear seldom come. The future may be, and most likely will be, brighter than in our despondency we think. Why then distress ourselves about it? Far wiser are the words of him who sang:

> "I do not ask to see the distant scene;
> One step enough for me."
>
> —*T. R. Stevenson.*

3 Anticipated evil may turn out to be positive good.

[11798] Some persons have the foolish habit of borrowing trouble from the future. The trials of to-day are not enough; they must send a telegram into the future to inquire what may be on the morrow. . . . Their fear leads them to suspect a foe where they find a friend. . . . Prepare for the worst, but hope for the best.—*Bowes* (*condensed*).

4 Anticipated evil must be borne in our own unaided strength.

[11799] As thy day, thy strength shall be. In strict proportion to the existing exigencies will be the God-given power; but if you cram and condense to-day's sorrows by experience, and to-morrow's sorrows by anticipation into the narrow round of one four-and-twenty hours, there is no promise that as *that* day thy strength shall be! God gives us power to bear all the sorrows of His making; but He does not give us power to bear the sorrows of our own making, which the borrowing of trouble most assuredly is.—*Maclaren* (*adapted*).

41

OVER-ANXIETY.

I. Its Prevalence.

[11800] Oh, how intricate and interwoven is this net of carefulness, in which the spirits of men are taken captive! It reacheth unto all; it is around all; it is Satan's snare for catching all. If I look into my own breast and observe what passeth therein continually; that is, to what my nature is ever inclined, I find, from the opening of my eyelids in the morning, until their closing in unconscious sleep, that faster and more plentiful than motes in the sunbeam, cares succeed each other, and float about in the light of intelligence which is within me; and Satan will not give me leisure for a morning or evening prayer, but he will be interposing, between the eye of my faith and the heaven of my desires, some phantom of worldly care or interest, the ghost of something past, or the shadow of something coming, or the substance of something present. And I do, moreover, find that there is no deliverance in nature; that the understanding hath its cares in the object of affection; that every profession is filled with worldly cares, which will not be kept out by the gratings of the convent, as our pious fathers vainly thought, which will not be kept out by the untrodden solitudes of the hermitage, nay, which will not be exorcised from the closet by the voice of solemn prayer, but haunt sick men's couches, and sit heavy upon the dying man's breast, and would seem almost to follow us into the grave; and I wonder not at the superstition of the Romanist, which feigneth that the fires of purgatory are needed to separate this earthly intermixture from the soul before it be fit to ascend into the pure abodes of the blessed.—*Irving.*

II. Its Nature.

[11801] It is a cankering, absorbing, restless anxiety about temporal things that our Lord condemns. It is accumulating treasure as treasure, as the object of the heart's highest value, that He warns against. It is labouring for the bread that perisheth as if there were nothing higher to labour for, that He reproves.

[11802] The evil forbidden is carefulness about the future; as we read it, "taking thought;" which is a more general expression than the Greek word doth amount to. All thinking is not caring. This is one special sort of thoughts that is here forbidden, careful thoughts; and

one special sort of care, not about duty, but event—and about event when it doth not depend upon our duty; that is, considered abstractly from it : and so the thing intended is, that doing all that lies within the compass of our duty to promote any good event or to hinder bad, that then we should cease from solicitude about the success ; from such solicitude, most especially, as shall be either distrustful or disquieting ; or more generally, that shall be any way either injurious to God or prejudicial to ourselves.—*Howe.*

[11803] The great mass of men, I think, are seasoned with a sort of acidless suffering. I think it is that state to which the Master refers when He forbids us to take thought. It certainly is not foresight that is forbidden, neither is it sagacity. It is not prevision. It is anxious fretting. It is anxious forethought, and afterthought, too ; for men fret both ways—for what is past, and for what is coming ; up and down ; in all ways ; in every direction ; in ways imaginable and unimaginable.

[11804] Foresight and foreboding are two very different things. It is not that the one is the exaggeration of the other, but the one is opposed to the other. The more a man looks forward in the exercise of foresight, the less he does so in the exercise of foreboding. And the more he is tortured by anxious thoughts about a possible future, the less clear vision has he of a likely future, and the less power to influence it.—*Maclaren.*

III. Its Folly.

1 **Though we cannot decrease evils by over-anxiety, yet we increase them.**

[11805] I met a brother who, describing a friend of his, said he was like a man who had dropped a bottle, and broken it, and put all the pieces in his bosom, where they were cutting him perpetually.—*Beecher.*

[11806] Anxiety is the poison of life, the parent of many sins, and more miseries. Why, then, allow it, when we know that all the future is guided by a Father's hand ?—*Blair.*

[11807] Do we indeed think, when the doing of our duty prevails not, that our anxiety and care beyond our duty shall ? Can that change times and seasons, and mend the state of things to-morrow or the next day ? Will to-morrow become by means of it a fairer or a calmer day, or be without it a more stormy one ? We might as well think, by our care, to order the celestial motions, to govern the tides, and retard or hasten the ebbs and floods ; or by our breath check and countermand the course of the greatest rivers. We, indeed, and all things that time contains and measures, are carried as in a swift stream or on rapid floods. And a man at sea might as well attempt, by thrusting or pulling the sides of the ship that carries him, to hasten or slacken its motion, as we, by our vexatious care, to check or alter the motions of Providence this way or that.—*Howe.*

2 **It is impossible to forecast, change, or provide against all the emergencies of the future.**

[11808] One might as well attempt to calculate mathematically the contingent forms of the tinkling bits of glass in a kaleidoscope as to look through the tube of the future and foretell its pattern.—*Beecher.*

[11809] After all your careful watching for the corner of the heaven where the cloud is to come from, there will be a cloud, and it will rise somewhere, but you *will* never know in what quarter. The morrow shall have its own anxieties. After all your fortifying of the castle of your life, there will be some little postern left unguarded, some little weak place in the wall left uncommanded by a battery, and there, where you never look for him, the inevitable invader will come in ! After all the plunging of the hero in the fabled waters that made him invulnerable, there was the little spot on the heel, and the arrow found its way there.—*Maclaren.*

[11810] How often do we find those evils in the bearing, light, and to have little in them, that looked big, seemed formidable, and carried a dreadful appearance with them at a distance ! What a fearful thing is poverty to man's imagination, and yet who live merrier lives than beggars ? We, therefore, by this anticipation, suffer in a worse kind. And if we do not make an affliction of no affliction, we make of a lighter one a more grievous. We turn a future outward affliction into a present inward and mental one.—*Howe.*

[11811] If we will stand boggling at imaginary evils, let us never blame a horse for starting at a shadow.—*L'Estrange.*

IV. Its Perils.

[11812] Immoderate care takes the heart off from better things, and usually while we are thinking how we shall do to live, we forget how to die.—*J. Watson.*

V. Its Sinfulness.

[11813] If we generalize the lessons that lie in these three great divisions of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vi. 24, &c.), we get, I think, these—1. Anxious thought is contrary to all the lessons of nature, which show it to be unnecessary. 2. To all the lessons of revelation or religion, which show it to be heathenish. 3. To the whole scheme of Providence, which shows it to be futile. You do not need to be anxious. It is wicked to be anxious. It is of no use to be anxious.—*Maclaren* (*condensed*).

[11814] Answer me this question. Is it not as easy for yonder sea to carry the bulkiest ship that ever rode her waves, as the sea-weed or

foam she flings upon the shore? Is it not as easy for that affluent and effulgent sun to bathe a mountain as to bathe a molehill in gold? Is it not as easy for this vast earth to carry on its back an Alp as a grain of sand, to nourish a cedar of Lebanon as the hyssop on the wall? Just so, believer, it is as easy for God to supply thy greatest as thy smallest wants; even as it was as much within His power to form a system as an atom—to create a blazing sun as to kindle a fire-fly's lamp.—*Guthrie.*

VI. Its Antidotes.

1 To simply and bravely face our troubles as they arise one by one.

[11815] Anxiety will not help us to bear tomorrow's care. By no means. It does no good. It is perfectly futile. "Which of you by taking thought," &c.? Did foreboding lessen the coming troubles there would be some excuse. Such is not the case. On the contrary, it makes us nervous, excited, useless, and therefore unfit to meet with fortitude the trials that may befall us.—*T. R. Stevenson.*

[11816] Many we know of a nervous temperament, who get fretting about things that are to happen—say, in two or three months' time. Instead of crossing a bridge when they come to it, they want to cross it long before they come anything like near it; and when the time comes, they find the trouble has vanished altogether. They are like the Marys, who, when they were going to the sepulchre, said one to the other, "Who shall roll us away the stone?" and when they got there they found there was no stone to be rolled away, for lo! an angel had descended, and rolled it away a long time before they came. Or, supposing the difficulty should still be there, how easily do we surmount it! As one says concerning death, "We feel a thousand deaths in fearing one." You remember how Leonidas, the Spartan, kept back the Persian hosts. He stood in the narrow pass of Thermopylæ, and as the foe came up, one by one, each man was able to push back his enemy, and they might have kept Greece thus for many a day. But suppose Leonidas and his handful of men had gone out into the wide open plain, and attacked the Persians—why, they must have died at once, though they should have fought like lions. Christian, stand you in the narrow pass of today, and as your troubles come, one by one, by faith you shall find out that your strength is sufficient for you; but if you go out into the vast plain of time, and think to meet all the troubles that shall ever come at once, it must be too much for you. Will you please not to borrow misery, for you will have enough of your own. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

2 To live by the day.

[11817] When I used to fish in mountain streams, if I had a short line and rod, I could direct it easily, and throw it into this or that pool as I pleased; but if I let out my line till it was twenty or thirty feet long, I could not direct it, but I was the victim of every floating stick and jutting rock and overhanging bough. So I have seen men wading down the stream of life, jumping from stone to stone, slipping on this rock, and falling into that pool, because their line was so long they could do nothing with it—a line that reached down forty years sometimes. Now, if you would avoid these difficulties, shorten your line! Let it reach over one day only; for "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." To the man who is living weeks or years in advance of the present, God says, "Go back, go back to your duties. Work while the day lasts, and take no thought for the morrow. I am Master down here."—*Beecher.*

3 To live much above the world.

[11818] Dust, by its own nature, can rise only so far above the road; and birds which fly higher never have it upon their wings; so the heart that knows how to fly high enough escapes those little cares and vexations which brood upon the earth, but cannot rise above it into that purer air.—*Ibid.*

4 To have cheerful confidence in God.

[11819] I think there is no one subject that will bear repetition among Christians so much as that of cheerful confidence in God, not in respect alone to the great and final issues of life, but in respect to those thoughts and feelings, that power of trust, that earnest and real belief in the presence and sympathy and helpfulness of God, which shall enable a man to dismiss care and undue anxiety.—*Ibid.*

[11820] There is a great art in bearing cares, just as there is a way to poise a heavy burden so skilfully upon the shoulder that it shall seem to lose half its weight. 1. Look well, first, to the real character of the care that is so trying. Is it worth so much thought? Is it a lawful care? Is there no sin in it, or in our measure of allowing it? 2. Bring it, and everything connected with it, before God in prayer; "everything," because we have the warrant (Phil. iv. 6; 1 Peter v. 7); everything, because nothing is so great that God is not able to give it, and nothing is so small as to be beneath His notice. Nothing honours God more than the child-like confidence of His believing children. 3. Leave everything with God in faith; not only pray, but leave the care; instead of nursing and brooding over it, dismiss it from the mind, as we read, Psa. x. 14, "the poor committeth himself unto Thee" (margin, leaveth himself). It was the testimony given to an eminent saint—"he laid aside all care, after he had prayed over any matter." 4. Cultivate a thankful spirit. Praise and thanksgiving are grand cures for care. How often, when we cannot pray, the best cure is, begin a song of praise. And have we not abundant cause at hand? Have we no comforts left? Is there no allevia-

tion in our distress? Is God changed? Remember past experiences! Look onward and upward; surely the hope of heaven makes up for every earthly want. 5. Do not burden to-day with the cares of to-morrow. Dragging the future into the present is one chief cause of spiritual weakness. Anxiety does not empty to-morrow of its troubles, but it empties it of its strength. It does not escape the evil, but disables us from bearing it when it comes. 6. Lean not upon prayer without proper effort. Foresight and diligence are a part of the Christian's duty. The same book which sends us to the raven points us to the ant. The Christian's part is to plough the ground and sow the seed, and then leave the harvest with Him who has the key of the clouds at His girdle. 7. Be much employed in promoting the good of others. Generous sympathy is a good corrective for sinful selfishness. 8. Expect the promised blessing of peace (Phil. iv. 6, 7). Is not this one cause why care and troubles are made our discipline? Rest is best relished after labour; the calm after the storm. The Christian would never know the value of God's sweet promises without the trials which make him put them to the proof. 9. Anticipate continually the bliss and rest of heaven. No care there! no sorrow there! Now realize the earnest, the blessed foretaste. And as the sabbath is the earnest of heaven, on that day, more than ordinarily, try to shut out all worldly cares, and gather an increase of strength to meet the struggles of the following week.—*Bowes.*

5 To be earnest in prayer and praise.

[11821] Phil. iv. 6. St Paul's remedy for over-anxiety was a compound of prayer and praise. "When you cannot pray," was the good advice of an excellent minister to one in trouble, "try to praise." Cf. Acts xvi. 25.—*Ibid.*

42

BIGOTRY.

I. Its Real Language.

[11822] The doctrine which from the very first origin of religious dissensions has been held by bigots of all sects, when condensed into a very few words, and stripped of all rhetorical disguise, is simply this: I am in the right, and you are in the wrong. When you are the stronger, you ought to tolerate me, for it is your duty to tolerate truth. But when I am the stronger, I shall persecute you; for it is my duty to persecute error.—*Macaulay.*

II. Its Definition.

[11823] Bigotry is too strong an attachment to, or fondness for, our own party, opinion, church, or religion; and he is a bigot who forbids any one to do good because he differs from himself in any of these particulars.—*Wesley.*

III. Its Description.

[11824] She has no head, and cannot think; she has no heart, and cannot feel; when she moves, it is in wrath; when she pauses, it is in ruin; her prayers are curses; her vengeance is eternal; her decalogue is written with the blood of her victims.—*Phillips.*

[11825] A bigot is a man of respectable opinions, but very ordinary talents; defending what is right without judgment, and believing what is holy without charity. Generally obstinate in proportion as he is wrong, he thinks he best shows his love of God by hatred of his fellow-creatures, and his humility by lauding himself and his sect. Vain is the endeavour to argue with men of his stamp.—*Chatfield.*

IV. Its Source.

1 Ignorance.

[11826] Young converts are generally great bigots. When we are first converted to God our brotherly affection too often resembles the narrowness of a river at its first setting out. But as we advance nearer to the great ocean of all good, the channel widens, and our hearts expand more and more.—*Salter.*

2 Inexperience.

[11827] Some time ago a countryman said to me, "I was exceedingly alarmed this morning, sir; I was going down in a lonely place, and I thought I saw a strange monster. It seemed in motion, but I could not discern its form. I didn't like to turn back, but my heart beat, and the more I looked the more I was afraid. But as I approached I saw it was a man; and who do you think it was?" "I know not." "Oh, it was my brother John." "Ah!" said I, to myself, as he added that it was early in the morning and very foggy, "how often do we thus mistake our Christian brethren!"—*Jay.*

V. Its Forms.

[11828] The real obscurantism is bigotry, in all its forms, which are many, and even opposite. There is the Pharisaic obscuration, which would put out the earthly lights, and the Sadducean, which would put out the heavenly; and these, in times of peril, when they are trembling for their beloved darkness, combine and conspire. Nor has any class of men been busier in this way than many of those who have boasted loudly of being the enlighteners of their age. In fact, they who brag of their tolerance have often been among the fiercest bigots, and worse than their opponents, from deeming themselves better.—*Hare.*

VI. Its Characteristics.

1 Folly.

[11829] Those who, having magnified into serious evils, by injudicious opposition, heresies in themselves insignificant, yet appeal to the magnitude of those evils to prove that their opposition was called for, act like unskilful physicians, who, when by violent remedies they have aggravated a trifling disease into a dangerous one, urge the violence of the symptoms which they themselves have produced in justification of their practice.—*Abp. Whately.*

2 Unreasonableness.

[11830] Religious intolerance assumes its authority on the credit of what we are at the best, and exercises it in the spirit of what we are at our worst. Do we conform even to ourselves, in our better character? Yet we exact from others to conform to us as such. There is no usurpation so flagrant as that of religious intolerance.—*B. Dockray.*

3 Inconsistency.

[11831] Bigots, who are violent, positive, and intolerant in their religious tenets, ought to feel very much humbled when they reflect that they would have been equally so for any other religion of their parent or native country.—*Burke.*

4 Power of perversion.

[11832] The bigot is like the pupil of the eye —the more light you put upon it the more it will contract.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

5 Hypocrisy and deception.

[11833] A man who stole the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in.—*Pollok.*

[11834] Bigotry murders religion to frighten fools with her ghost.—*Cotton.*

6 Pessimism.

[11835] Some men magnify the importance of their own little clique of believers by denying the godliness of all who differ from them. They remind one of Bishop Hacket's story. "At Wimbledon," says he, "not far from me, a warrener promised Thomas, Earl of Exeter, that he should have a burrow of rabbits, all of them of what colour he pleased. 'Let them be all white,' said the earl. Whereupon the warrener killed up all the rest but the white rabbits and sold them away, and left not enough to serve the earl's table." A sorry few would be left to serve the Lord and preserve the name of Christ upon the earth, if some men's judgments could be final.—*Spurgeon.*

VII. Its Evil Consequences.

1 It dwarfs the soul.

[11836] There is no tariff so injurious as that with which sectarian bigotry guards its commodities; it dwarfs the soul by shutting out truths from other continents of thought, and checks the circulation of its own.—*E. H. Chapin.*

2 It practically excludes repentance.

[11837] How can the bigot repent? for repenting is turning to God; and how can a man turn to God who does not know where to look for God, who does not know who God is, who mistakes the devil for God, and fancies the all-loving Father to be a taskmaster, and a tyrant, and an accuser, and a respecter of persons, without mercy or care for ninety-nine hundredths of the souls which He has made? How can he find God? He does not know whom to look for.

How can the bigot repent? for to repent means to turn from wrong to right; and he has lost the very notion of right and wrong, in the midst of all his religion and his fine doctrines. He fancies that right does not mean love, mercy, goodness, patience, but notions like his own; and that wrong does not mean hatred, and evil-speaking, and suspicion, and uncharitableness, and slander, and lying, but notions unlike his own. What he agrees with he thinks is heavenly, and what he disagrees with is of hell.

3 It deadens the sense of right and wrong.

[11838] Whosoever indulges, even in little matters, in hard judgments, and suspicions, and hasty sneers, and loud railing against men who differ from him in religion, or politics, or in anything else, is deadening his own sense of right and wrong, and sowing the seeds of that same state of mind which, as the Lord told the Pharisees, is utterly the worst into which any human being can fall.—*Charles Kingsley.*

4 It produces untold misery.

[11839] It has inspired its votaries with a savage ferocity; has plunged the fatal dagger into innocent blood; depopulated towns and kingdoms; overthrown states and empires, and brought down the righteous vengeance of heaven upon a guilty world.—*Saurin.*

5 It plays into the hands of the common enemy.

[11840] Another subject of general lamentation is the evil produced by party spirit in politics and religion. Lord Brougham, in a well-known passage, supposes all the statesmen of last century arranged before us as in a picture-gallery, and a stranger coming to survey them. "Here," would that stranger say, "stand the choicest spirits of their age, the greatest wits, the noblest orators, the wisest politicians, and the most illustrious patriots." "Here stand all these 'lights of the world and demigods of fame;' but here they stand, not ranged on one side of this gallery, having served a common country. With the same bright object in view,

their efforts were divided, not united. They fiercely combated with each other, and did not together assail the common foe. Their great exertions were bestowed, their more than mortal forces were expended, not in furthering the general good, not in resisting their country's enemies, but in conflicts among themselves; and all their triumphs were won over each other, and all their sufferings were endured at each other's hands." The Rev. J. A. James quotes this passage, and adds, that the stranger, in surveying the portraits of our theologians, polemics, authors, and preachers, would be compelled to endure the same painful surprise, and indulge in the same sorrowful reflections.—*J. McCosh.*

VIII. Its Survival.

[11841] The misfortune still is, that men honour the doctrines of toleration with their lips while they seem not aware that their hearts are far from them. The principles of intolerance still maintain their hold, though they may be awed, and tamed, and civilized, and reduced to assume forms less frightful and destructive in these later ages.—*C. Lloyd.*

IX. Counsels.

1 **Cultivate a tolerant spirit.**

[11842] In things essential, unity; in things doubtful, liberty; in all things charity.—*Victoria.*

[11843] With perfect harmony in the principles of a pious life, and in the knowledge of important truths, there may yet be a very wide diversity of opinions, plans, and modes of action. Bear with this diversity, however great or unpleasant it may at times seem to you to be. The Lord has appointed it.—*Schleiermacher.*

2 **Appreciate good whenever and wherever found.**

[11844] Our Lord is repeating down through all time the rebuke He gave to the uncharitableness of John, and the one-sidedness of Martha, and the murmurs of His disciples—is teaching us to look with an approving eye on every honest effort to do good, and to take pleasure in the wide variety of human character and Christian grace.—*Ker.*

3 **Remember the bigotry of another is no excuse for our own.**

[11845] It is not impossible that one who casts out devils himself may forbid you to do so. This was the case in the text (Mark ix. 38). But beware of retorting. Another's not observing the direction of our Lord is no reason why you should neglect it. Let him have all the bigotry to himself. If he forbids you, do not you forbid him.—*Wesley.*

43

DIVISIONS, INCLUDING SCHISM.

I. Their Nature and Sinfulness.

[11846] There is more of the man in it than of the Christian, when we can make a shift to divide about a word, and that, in the present use of it, devised only by man; when words that are merely of human stamp, and used in no such sense or to no such purpose in Scripture, however they may be significant, yet too great a stress and weight is laid upon them.—*Howe.*

[11847] To separate from the church in some one or few essential articles, while you pretend to hold to Christ the head, is heresy: to separate from it in spirit, by refusing holiness, and not loving such as are truly holy, is damning ungodliness or wickedness: to differ from it by any error of judgment or life, against the law of God, is sin. To magnify any one church or party, so as to deny due love and communion to the rest, is schism. To limit all the church to your party, and deny all or any of the rest to be Christians, and parts of the universal church, is schism by a dangerous breach of charity; and this is the principal schism that I here admonish you to avoid. It is schism also to condemn unjustly any particular church, as no church: and it is schism to withdraw your bodily communion from a church that you were bound to hold that communion with, upon a false supposition that it is no church, or is not lawfully to be communicated with. And it is schism to make divisions or parties in a church, though you divide not from that church.—*R. Baxter*, 1615–1691.

II. Their Causes.

1 **Dulness and obtuseness of mind.**

[11848] It is a dull and obtuse mind that must divide in order to distinguish; but it is a still worse that distinguishes in order to divide. In the former we may contemplate the source of superstition and idolatry; in the latter, of schism, heresy, and a seditious and sectarian spirit.—*Coleridge.*

2 **Ignorance and prejudice.**

[11849] A wall having become feeble by age a portion of it fell down, and great consequences followed. The flowers and shrubs of each garden discovered that members of their own families had been living on the other side, and therefore really near each other, though they had had no communion, owing to the wall between.—*Bowden.*

[11850] Charles V., Emperor of Germany, at the close of his active and stirring life, retired to a monastery, where he amused himself by constructing clocks. The emperor is said to have expressed no less regret than astonishment

at the remembrance of his own folly, in having used such violent measures to make about twenty millions of people agree in their religious sentiments, when he found, after repeated experiments, that with all his skill he was unable to make two clocks go exactly alike for any length of time.—*Bowes.*

3 Defective personal holiness.

[11851] If the Christian religion were truly entertained, and men did seriously mind the precepts of it, and give up themselves to the obedience of its laws, differences would not be easily commenced, nor so vehemently prosecuted, nor so pertinaciously continued in, as they are. Men would not, upon every slight reason, and little doubt and scruple, rend and tear the body of Christ in pieces, and separate themselves from the communion of the church they live in, and in which they were baptized and received their Christianity.—*Abp. Tillotson.*

III. Their Folly and Suicidal Results.

[11852] "I have somewhere," says Mr. Newton, "met with a passage of ancient history, the substance of which, though my recollection is but imperfect, I will relate. It is an account of two large bodies of forces, which fell in with each other on a dark night. A battle immediately ensued. The attack and resistance were supported with equal spirit. The contest was fierce and bloody, great was the slaughter on both sides, and on both sides they were on the point of claiming the victory, when the day broke, and as the light advanced, they soon perceived, to their astonishment and grief, that owing to the darkness of the night they had been fighting, not with enemies, as they had supposed, but with friends and allies: they had been doing their enemies' work, weakening the cause they wished to support. The expectation of each party, to conquer the other, was founded upon the losses the opponents had sustained: and this was what proportionably aggravated their lamentation and distress, when they had sufficient light to show them the mischief which they had done. Ah! if shame be compatible with the heavenly state, as perhaps in some sense it may (for believers, when most happy here, are most ostensibly ashamed of themselves), shall we not even then be ashamed to think how often, in this dark world, we mistook our friends for foes; and that while we thought we were fighting for the cause of God and truth, we were wounding and worrying the people whom He loved, perhaps in indulging our own narrow, selfish, party prejudices under the semblance of zeal for His glory?"

IV. Their Remedy.

[11853] Surely there is no better way to stop the rising of new sects and schisms than to reform abuses, to compound the smaller differences; to proceed mildly, and not with sanguinary persecutions; and rather to take off the principal authors, by winning and advancing them, than to enrage them by violence and bitterness.—*Bacon.*

V. Distinctive Features of the Differences between Christians.

[11854] As for the catholic Church of Christ, I suppose no intelligent person will deny that none of the social differences that exist between classes or individuals, founded on secular reasons, approach in virulence of hatred to the differences which part those who profess and call themselves Christians.—*A. K. H. Boyd.*

VI. The Evil Consequences of the Controversies of even Good Men.

[11855] Christian brethren, surely we have this reason for unity. Many unfriendly eyes mark our strifes. They give great occasion to the enemy to blaspheme. And the enemy takes the occasion. The bitter enmities, the groundless and deplorable schisms, in the Church of Christ, form a stock commonplace on the lips of the enemies of our holy faith. The outer world, too, is always ready to set the stumbling or failure of any professed believer to the discredit of all. And such, in its essential nature, is all contention, that it is quite impossible to engage in it without throwing down some of the fences which guard us against our spiritual foes—our ensnaring temptations. Angry and vindictive feeling: unfairness and untruthfulness: the arts of misrepresentation; and the arms of intimidation where that is possible: the eyes shut against light, whether from argument or information—shut sometimes unconsciously, sometimes half-consciously, sometimes quite consciously: these are the kind of things that come of falling out by the way among Christians. I have looked on, carefully, at a good deal of religious controversy, both theological and ecclesiastical: and I can say sincerely, I never saw it conducted with candour: rarely with common honesty: not always with common decency. I am speaking, I ask you to observe, of the controversies of good Christian men.—*Ibid.*

[11856] It is matter of complaint and wonder that men can find so much leisure to divert from such things—wherein there is so much both of importance and pleasure—unto what one would think should have little of temptation or allurement in it—contentious jangling. It might rather be thought its visible fruits and tendencies should render it the most dreadful thing to every serious beholder. What tragedies hath it wrought in the Christian Church! Into how weak and languishing a condition hath it brought the religion of professed Christians! Hence have arisen the intemperate preternatural heats and angers that have spent its strength and spirits and made it look with so meagre and pale a face. We have had a greater mind to dispute than live, and to con-

tend about what we know not than to practise the far greater things we know, and which more directly tend to nourish and maintain the divine life.—*Howe.*

VII. The Gain of Satan by the Disunion and Dissensions of Christians.

[11857] It is never more merry with wolves and foxes than when the shepherds are together by the ears; lamentable are those flocks, miserable are those sheep! "Divide et regna" was Machiavel's rule, and the old serpent makes use of it; nor doth he labour in anything more than in blowing of the coals, and increasing the heat of contention betwixt God's ministers, by his incendiaries.—*N. Rogers.*

[11858] It is clear by too many woeful experiences that differences may arise betwixt God's dearest children, especially about things indifferent, which though they be originally inherent in the judgment, yet by consequence and sympathy they breed many times (except there be a great deal of humble charity, and gracious humility on both sides) some aversion and coldness in the affections. Neither so only, but sometimes also alienation is wrought immediately upon their affections, without intercedency of dissension in opinion. Satan gains very much by the disunion of Christian hearts, and the falling out of those which have given their names to religion; and therefore he leaves no way of temptation unattempted, no hellish policy unpractised, to set such at odds. He labours mightily, and prodigiously prevails at this day, by vexing their judgments with opinionativeness, self-conceited speculations, and thoughts of separation, to drive them by degrees from divorce of judgments in some singular apprehensions to disaffection; from disaffection to faction, from faction to schism, from schism (to speak in softest phrase) to many dreadful distempers.—*R. Bolton*, 1637.

VIII. Dissensions and Different Church Organizations viewed in the Light of Eternity.

[11859] Here the corn grows, as it were, in different fields, separated it may be by thick and thorny hedges. But by and by, when the harvest is come, the wheat will be gathered into the garner, without one single mark to distinguish the grains from each other, or to show that they were ever divided from each other.—*Toplady* (*condensed*).

IX. Contrast between Man's Narrowness and God's Breadth of View with Respect to Human Differences of Opinion.

[11860] Though the church of Christ has rent its own unity, we can see what may be called the breadth of view of the Great Head, in that He does not identify Himself with their narrowness, nor confine His reviving influences to any one portion where His truth remains. The showers of His grace come from too high a source to be limited by the walls they build against each other.—*Ker.*

44

FANATICISM.

I. Its Definition.

[11861] Fanaticism is zeal without knowledge and without restraint. "Zeal without discretion," says St. Bernard, "is strong-headed; therefore let zeal spur on discretion, but discretion rein in zeal."

[11862] Fanaticism is the child of false zeal and of superstition, the father of intolerance and of persecution.—*T. Fletcher.*

[11863] This is fanaticism when, by thinking too much of the other world, a man becomes unfit to live in this.—*Bovee.*

[11864] Fanaticism is such an overwhelming impression of the ideas relating to the future world as disqualifies for the duties of life.—*R. Hall.*

II. Its Diagnosis.

[11865] The cause which has given birth to fanaticism in all ages—the facility of mingling human errors with the fundamental truths of religion.—*Sydney Smith.*

[11866] It is a most solemn duty to cultivate our understandings to the utmost. For I have seen the evil moral consequences of fanaticism to a greater degree than I ever expected to see them realized; and I am satisfied that a neglected intellect is far oftener the cause of mischief to a man than a perverted or over-valued one. Men retain their natural quickness or cleverness while their reason and judgment are allowed to go to ruin.—*Dr. Arnold.*

[11867] All fanaticism in matters of religion grows out of a disseverance of the Spirit from the revealed word. All erring enthusiasts are persuaded that the Spirit teaches them independently of, and beyond, what is written.—*Walker.*

[11868] A fanatic, either religious or political, is the subject of strong delusions, while the term illusion is applied solely to the visions of an uncontrolled imagination, chimerical ideas of one blinded by hope, passion, or credulity, or, lastly, to spectral and other ocular deceptions, to which the word illusion is never applied.—*R. Whately.*

[11869] There are men in whom conscience is strongly implanted without a corresponding breadth of view, who place duty and sin in things indifferent, and make the way of God's commandments, which is very broad, exceedingly narrow, through restrictions which are not His. Such are most fanatics.—*Ker (adapted).*

[11870] The outbreaks of fanaticism in the sixteenth century, and even in our own time, show to what extravagances men and women may be led by the promptings of a diseased conscience—*Spectator*, 1883.

III. Its Utter Uselessness.

1 To any cause to which it is allied.

[11871] Let none of us cherish or invoke the spirit of religious fanaticism. The ally would be quite as pestilent as the enemy.—*R. Walsh.*

2 To its victims themselves.

[11872] Fanaticism is a fire, which heats the mind indeed, but heats without purifying; it stimulates and ferments all the passions, but it rectifies none of them.—*W. Warburton.*

IV. The Wrong Light in which the Deserved Contempt of Fanaticism is too commonly regarded.

[11873] Everybody knows that fanaticism is religion caricatured; bearing, indeed, the same relation to it that a monkey bears to a man; yet by many contempt of fanaticism is received as a sure sign of hostility to religion.—*E. P. Whipple.*

V. Its Relentless Character and Mischievous Consequences.

[11874] There is not any cruelty so inexorable and unrelenting as that which proceeds from a bigoted and presumptuous supposition of doing service to God. Under the influence of such hallucination all common modes of reasoning are perverted, and all general principles destroyed. The victim of the fanatical persecutor will find that the stronger the motives he can urge for mercy are, the weaker will be his chance of obtaining it, for the merit of his destruction will be supposed to rise in value in proportion as it is affected at the expense of every feeling both of justice and humanity.—*Colton.*

[11875] Fanatics are inexorable for mercy; all who are with them they treat as enemies; considering all heterodox who do not embrace their dogmas. Fanaticism arrays father against son, mother against daughter, disregards all the ties of consanguinity, all the bonds of former friendship, and all whom it cannot control endeavours to destroy.—*L. C. Judson.*

[11876] The blind, foolish fanaticism of one foolish man may cause more evil than the united efforts of twenty rogues.—*Baron de Grimm.*

VI. Its Reaction.

[11877] Fanaticism is one of those evils from which society is never wholly exempt; but which bursts out at different periods with peculiar violence, and sometimes overwhelms everything in its course. The last eruption took place about a century and a half ago, and destroyed both church and throne with its tremendous force. Though irresistible, it was short; enthusiasm spent its force, the usual reaction took place, and England was deluged with ribaldry and indecency, because it had been worried with fanatical restrictions.—*Sydney Smith.*

45

PREJUDICE.

I. Definition and Nature.

[11878] Prejudices are a thick cloud on the face of reason.—*B. Dockley.*

[11879] Some of the darkest and most dangerous prejudices of man arise from the most honourable principles of the mind. When prejudices are caught up from bad passions, the worst of men feel intervals of remorse, to soften and disperse them; but when they arise from a generous though mistaken source they are hugged closer to the bosom, and the kindest and most compassionate natures feel a pleasure in fostering a blind and unjust resentment.—*Lord Erskine.*

[11880] A prejudice is an obstinate persuasion, for which we can assign no reason; for the moment a reason can be given, it ceases to be a prejudice.—*Sharpe's Essays.*

[11881] Prejudice may be considered as a continual false medium of viewing things, for prejudiced persons not only never speak well, but also never think well, of those whom they dislike, and the whole character and conduct is considered with an eye to that particular thing which offends them.—*Butler.*

II. Scripture Illustrations and Examples.

[11882] John vii. 27.—"Howbeit we know this man whence he is," and therefore they rejected Him, because He was "the carpenter's son!"

John ix. 29.—"We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence He is," and therefore they rejected Him on this ground. So that in either case "He was despised and rejected of men." What a strange proof of inveterate prejudice! See Jer. vi. 10; Matt. xiii. 55; Luke ix. 53; John i. 46.

III. Prejudices of Youth and Age.

[11883] To lay aside all prejudice is to lay aside all principles: he who is destitute of principles is governed theoretically and practically by whims.—*Jacobi*

[11884] The prejudices of youth pass away with it; those of old age last only because there is no other age to be hoped for.—*Stanislaus.*

[11885] Prejudices may be somewhat rectified by age, and by converse with the world, but they flourish in full vigour in youthful minds, reared in seclusion and privacy, and undisciplined by intercourse with various classes of mankind.—*C. B. Brown.*

IV. Sources of Prejudice.

1 Ignorance and narrowness.

[11886] The prejudiced are apt to converse with but one sort of men, to read but one sort of books, to come in hearing of but one sort of notions.—*T. Barrow.*

[11887] If a man will look at most of his prejudices he will find that they arise from his field of view being necessarily narrow.—*Lord Burleigh.*

[11888] Prejudice is the child of ignorance.—*Hazlitt.*

2 Weakness of judgment.

[11889] Remember, when the judgment is weak, the prejudice is strong.—*Kane O'Hara.*

V. Its Characteristics and Properties.

1 It is self-deceptive.

[11890] Persons often for some cause or other are under the influence of prejudice without even knowing it.—*J. Hughes.*

2 It is tenacious.

[11891] Drive prejudices out by the door, and they will re-enter by the window.—*Frederick the Great.*

3 It is self-accommodating and self-sustained.

[11892] Prejudice, like the spider, makes everywhere its home, and lives where there seems nothing to live on.—*T. Paine.*

4 It is untruthful.

[11893] Prejudice squints when it looks, and lies when it talks.—*Duchess d'Abarantes.*

5 It is violent.

[11894] Opinions founded on prejudice are always sustained with the greatest violence.—*Lord Jeffrey.*

VI. Its Mischievous Results.

1 It impairs our happiness.

[11895] Prejudice is a mist which, in our journey through the world, often dims the brightest and obscures the best of all the good and glorious objects that meet us on our way.—*Shaftesbury*

2 It impairs our mental faculties.

[11896] Prejudice, and whatever else hinders our seeing things exactly as they are, injures the understanding and destroys sound judgment.—*Mrs. Wallace.*

[11897] Prejudices are fetters that enslave the intellect, clouds that obscure the vision, bolts that shut out the truth.

3 It neutralizes the power of truth.

[11898] Prejudice has always a neutralizing power in whatever mind it dwells; it acts in relation to truth as alkali in relation to acids, neutralizing its very power; arguments the most cogent, discourses the most powerful, can be neutralized at once by some prejudice in the mind.—*R. Thomas.*

[11899] Blind prepossessions and one-sided prejudices are like the trade-winds, which, holding out in one course, make compass and helm alike useless.

4 It produces excessive disagreeableness and bitterness.

[11900] To persons who have taken a prejudice, every word is misunderstood, every look offends.—*Miss Anne Isabella Thackeray.*

VII. Its Remedy and Removal.

1 Practical hints as to the method of procedure.

[11901] Reasoning against a prejudice is like fighting against a shadow; it exhausts the reasoner without visibly affecting the prejudice; arguments cannot do the work of instruction any more than blows can take the place of sunlight.—*W. Mildmay.*

[11902] Every one is forward to complain of the prejudices that misled other men and parties, as if he were free, and had none of his own; this being objected to on all sides, it is agreed that it is a fault and a hindrance to knowledge. What now is the cure? No other but this, that every man should let alone others' prejudices and examine his own.—*J. Locke.*

[11903] Care is to be taken not to shock too violently at the beginning prejudices which we hope to overcome in the end.—*S. Silton.*

[11904] When we destroy an old prejudice, we have need of a new virtue.—*Madame de Staël.*

2 The special difficulty of removing prejudices other than the vulgar.

[11905] The confirmed prejudices of a thoughtful life are as hard to change as the confirmed habits of an indolent life; and as some must trifle away age because they trifled away youth, others must labour on in a maze of error because they have wandered there too long to find their way out.—*Bolingbroke.*

VIII. Prejudice and Principle.

[11906] We are involved so early in the prejudices of so many whose interest is concerned to communicate them to us, that it becomes extremely difficult to distinguish through the rest of life what is natural to us and what is artificial.—*St. Pierre.*

46

SECTARIANISM OR PARTY SPIRIT.

I. Its Definition.

[11907] By sectarian, I mean one who hath taken up with a part of the Divine word, and resolveth within himself that it is the whole of it, and that whatever passes beyond or diverges from this his well-shapen pattern must be error, and not for a moment to be believed.—*Edward Irving.*

[11908] Instead of regarding the church of Christ as wide and comprehensive as the arch of heaven, men have striven to shut it up within the narrow limits of sect and party and denomination; and, drawing a circle around them, have borrowed the sign of the cross and contended for the exclusive presence of Him who is the great Teacher and centre of brotherhood.—*Evangelical Magazine.*

[11909] Party spirit is the excess and perversion of a legitimate, limited social feeling, that may be designated party feeling; and, deriving itself from the same springs as the love of kindred or of country, though neither so sacred as the first of these, nor so noble as the second, is yet as natural as either.—*Abp. Whately.*

[11910] He who would desire to have an accurate description of party spirit need only go through Paul's description of charity, reversing every point in the detail.—*Ibid.*

II. Its Causes.

[11911] That which is said of Lucilla's faction, that anger bred it, pride fostered it, and covetousness confirmed it, is true of all schisms, though with some inversion. For the most are bred through pride; while men, upon a high conceit of themselves, scorn to go in the common road, and affect singularity in opinion; are confirmed through anger, while they stomach and grudge any contradiction, and are nourished through covetousness, while they seek ability to bear out their part. In some others, again, covetousness obtains the first place, anger the second, pride the last. Herein, therefore, I have been always wont to commend and admire the humility of those great and profound wits whom depth of knowledge hath not led to by-paths in judgment, but, walking in the beaten path of the church, have bent all their forces to the establishment of received truths, accounting it greater glory to confirm an ancient verity than to devise a new opinion, though never so profitable, unknown to their predecessors. I will not reject a truth for mere novelty; old truths may come newly to light; neither is God tied to times for the gift of His illumination; but I will suspect a novel opinion of untruth, and not entertain it, unless it may be deduced from ancient grounds.—*Bp. Hall.*

III. Its Banefulness.

[11912] It is allowed to us (as churches) to provoke one another to love and good works; but when ambitious rivalry takes the place of fraternal stimulus the uppermost hand has been given to the devil.—*Dr. Parker.*

[11913] The church has never enjoyed an entire exemption from civil war. The moment men agreeing in theology have been denominated, as if their name had wrought a malignant spell upon them, they have begun to commit denominational sin. Sectarian ambition springs up; sectarian pride sets in; sectarian animosity is engendered; sectarian officiousness goes out capturing proselytes; sectarian jealousy rankles; and finally, with all its fury, wrath, and strategy, its bloodhound passions, and its musketry of accusation, and its small arms of malignant slander, open sectarian battle rages. Christendom slips back into practical paganism, while Christians sit picking motes out of one another's eyes.—*Bp. Huntington.*

IV. Hopeful Signs respecting its Decline.

[11914] One of the most hopeful signs of our times is that the assaults on our common faith are bringing the faithful nearer to each other. As the foe assails our walls, we discover that one wall girds us all, one citadel of faith unites us all. Those who were once regarded as enemies are recognized as fellow-soldiers and saints, and of the household of God; and as we see this we "thank God and take courage."—*Bp. Magee.*

V. Our Practical Duty on Account of the Variety of Sects and Schools of Thought.

[11915] Suppose you were on a journey, and

saw some travellers choose one way, and some another, though all aiming to reach the same city, would you therefore turn back and stop at home? Would you not rather take the more pains to inquire the best road, and then act on the information you had obtained?—*Bowes.*

VI. Reasons why Uniformity seems Impossible.

1 On account of the many-sidedness of truth and the limited receptive power of the human mind.

[11916] It seems as though truth were not merely circular but globular, so that it is impossible for any society or individual to view it in its entirety. It has been our hope and belief that to each sect, however small, has been entrusted some seed of truth which it is bound in duty to cultivate. The design will appear at last when each has worked out its own portion of the great mosaic.—*Spectator.*

2 On account of the real and accidental differences of men's mental power.

[11917] So long as men have such variety of principles, such several constitutions, educations, tempers and distempers, hopes, interests, weaknesses, different degrees of light and different degrees of understanding, it is impossible all should be of one mind. And what is impossible to be done is not necessary it should be done.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

VII. Remedies.

1 How can existing sectarianism be remedied? how can we have unity in the Church?

[11918] This is a question of vital importance; it is only as the right answer is given and acted upon that the church can ever rise to a realization of her supreme power. The answer is contained in some such sentences as these. By each section of the church living nearer to Jesus; cultivating His spirit; breathing the atmosphere of prayer; engaging in earnest opposition to the common foe; many as the beams, but one as the sun; many as the mountain streams and valley rills, but one as the grand, majestic river, rolling on with irresistible force until it is merged and lost in the vaster ocean. God speed the day when such unity as that shall prevail.—*A. F. B. Barfield.*

VIII. The Advantages of Union.

[11919] 1. Strength. 2. Prosperity. 3. Victory. 4. God would approve. Satan would be filled with fear, and the comment of the world would be, "Behold, how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."—*Ibid.*

47

SHIBBOLETHS, USE OF.

I. Origin of the Term, and its Present Meaning.

[11920] A word which was made the criterion by which to distinguish the Ephraimites from the Gileadites. The Ephraimites, not being able to pronounce the letter שׁ, *sh*, pronounced the word *sibboleth* (see Judges xi. and xii). Hence the criterion test, or watchword of a party, that which distinguishes one party from another; usually some peculiarity in things of little importance.

[11921] The word, however, has now come to be applied to the password of a secret society; the secret by which those of a party know each other.

II. Its Paralyzing Effect upon Vital Religion.

[11922] A dogma is a fossil belief—valuable archæologically, but practically useless for purposes of life. For as long as a belief is living, it is always growing; and so, when it has got to such a final shape that it is fixed and set for ever, it is practically, or at least partially, dead. There is no greater difference in the world than between the New Testament idea of doctrine and the prevalent idea of New Testament dogma. Doctrine in the New Testament always means living, practical instruction, suggestive, stimulative. Dogma is too often the crystallized, petrified form of what was once a living faith, but has long ceased to be so.

So with the conventional language of theology. People like to listen to the accredited dialect. But then it is only the dialect they love, and not the thought it enshrines. And the dialect is death to them; and it is most fatal to those who love it best. For it supersedes the mind, and paralyzes the heart, and hides the fact of spiritual death under the delusion of a name to live.—*Beecher.*

III. Its Alliance with the Disintegrating Principles in the Church.

[11923] That evil spirit which gathers men in separate and hostile bands, each round its own miserable banner, on which some wretched party device replaces the one sign, which, lifted up, should draw all together; the spirit which leads men to substitute their shibboleths for the creeds of the church, their leaders for the church's Head, their party sympathies and attachments for the communion of saints.—*Bp. Magee.*

IV. Homiletical Hints.

[11924] (Judges xii. 6.) 1. In this case a clear test of nationality. Yet even here there might be some failures through imperfection of utterance on the one hand, or dulness of hear-

ing on the other. 2. Words are often evidences of character. 3. Men not to be condemned because they cannot, through mental or moral peculiarity, pronounce the creed of another. 4. One word—the name of Jesus—we should all seek to understand, and worthily to mention.—*Biblical Museum.*

48

SUPERSTITION.

I. Supposed Influence of Scenery upon its Prevalence and Variety of Forms.

[11925] In mountainous countries we find the greatest number of superstitious beliefs, because in these the powers of nature are most frequently maintained in the most various forms; and the superstitions of one mountainous country also differ from those of another, according to the peculiar character of its scenery and productions, the latitude in which it lies, and its proximity to, or distance from, the sea.—*D. Conway.*

II. Its Definition.

[11926] Were I to define superstition I would call it such an apprehension of God in the thoughts of men as renders Him grievous and burdensome to them, and so destroys all free and cheerful converse with Him, begetting, in the stead thereof, a forced and jejune devotion, void of inward life and love.—*John Smith (Camb.)*

[11927] Superstition is not (as it has been defined) an excess of religious feeling, but a misdirection of it, an exhausting of it on vanities of man's devising.—*Abp. Whately.*

[11928] By superstitions I mean all those hypocritical arts of appeasing God and procuring favour without obeying His laws, or reforming our sins; infinite such superstitions have been invented by heathens, by Jews, by Christians themselves.—*Sherlock.*

[11929] So is a superstitious man: jealous, blind, forward, and mistaken, he runs towards heaven, as he thinks, but he chooses foolish paths, and out of fear takes anything he is told, or fancies and guesses concerning God by measures taken from his own diseases and imperfections.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

III. Its Forms.

[11930] There is a superstition in avoiding superstition, when men think to do best if they go farthest from the superstition formerly received; therefore care should be had that the good be not taken away with the bad, which commonly is done when the people is the reformer.—*Bacon.*

IV. Its Characteristics.

1 Endlessness.

[11931] Superstition confounds the means of grace with the grace of the means when water, or bread and wine, are made signs of the power of the Holy Spirit, or of Christ's body and blood sacrificed for us; superstition fastens on the water, or the bread and wine, as if they were the things themselves. When a place must be set apart for Divine worship, superstition fancies that God dwells in that place rather than in the hearts of the worshippers. When pictures or images of holy persons are set before us, superstition fastens on the image as if it were the reality. When rites or ceremonies are used to express our devotion, superstition makes them our devotion. When prayers have to be said, superstition makes the saying them prayer. When good books are to be perused, superstition makes the perusal edification. When works are to be done from a good motive, superstition makes the outward action the good work. When suffering for righteousness' sake is commended, superstition takes the suffering for merit; and so in many other instances. It seizes over on the outward—on that which is not moral; on that which strikes the senses or the imagination—and fastens there; while true religion, on the contrary, calls on us to "lift up our hearts" from the earthly to the heavenly, and use the outward as a help to the inward.—*Abp. Whately.*

[11932] Superstition is an endless thing. If one human invention and institution be admitted, though seemingly never so innocent, as even of washing hands, behold a troop cometh! a door is opened for many other such things.—*Matthew Henry.*

2 Restlessness.

[11933] The superstitious man vacillates between hot and cold, between hope and fear, between self-confidence and despondency. He is afraid to act, lest offence be given to the God he fears; and afraid not to act, for the same reason. He is ever restless, but his activity is more frequently exercised in spreading misery than in propagating good.

3 Unhealthy excitement.

[11934] The superstitious man has his moments of high ecstasies and ethereal pleasure, of convulsive action and feverish joy, but succeeded, ever and anon, by periods of exhaustion and weakness, of distaste to and incapacity for exertion. After his strength has spent itself, he feels, in the ethereal atmosphere of which he breathes, like those travellers who ascend the Alps or Andes; and who, when they reach a certain elevation, experience a quickness of breathing, an acceleration of pulse, a loss of appetite, and nausea, which issue in a complete prostration of strength and irresistible somnolency. His very rest is like that produced by opiate drugs—he awakes from it in startling alarms, and with darker forebodings. With

occasional joy, he is yet without peace ; harassed by fear, he is without genuine trust and confidence ; scared by expected punishment, he is never allured by deep and fervent love.

V. Its Sources and Causes.

[11935] Superstition usually springs either from servile fear, which makes people desire that God is always wrathful, and invents means to please Him ; or from a natural inclination we all have to idolatry, which makes men think they see some ray of the Divinity in extraordinary creatures, and on that account worship them.—*J. Claude.*

[11936] The causes of superstition are—pleasing and sensual rites and ceremonies ; excess of outward and pharisaical holiness ; over-great reverence of traditions which cannot but load the church ; the stratagems of prelates for their own ambition and lucre ; the favouring too much of good intentions, which openeth the gate to conceits and novelties ; the taking an aim at Divine matters by human, which cannot but breed mixture of imaginations ; and lastly, barbarous times,especially joined with calamities and disasters.

[11937] Its chief causes are : (1) Ignorance, (2) servile and senseless fear of God, (3) misdirected belief, (4) deep disquiet of man's passions.—*C. Neil.*

VI. Its Injuriousness.

1 **It has occasioned the rejection of Christianity.**

[11938] The religion of revelation stands clear of all the distortions into which men have wrought it, and of all the abominations with which they have associated it. It brings glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and goodwill toward men. But the fine gold has been changed, and in tossing away the counterfeit men have lost sight of the heavenly reality. The counterfeit, however, must bear a proportion of the guilt in the dishonour done to the pure original ; and to a corrupted Christianity, as a subordinate cause, must be assigned no small amount of influence in occasioning the rejection of Christianity itself.—*T. Pearson.*

VII. Its Cruel Triumphs.

[11939] Thou hast selected thy victims from among the excellent of the earth ; it is thy peculiar character to have reversed all the laws of nature and of God ; to have inflicted on men of the sublimest virtue the tortures of the foulest villany ; to have rendered purity unsullied, and piety sweeter and more celestial than thou couldst comprehend, the certain prey of misery and death ; thou hast fashioned to thyself a God stern and sullen, retiring in awful gloom from this creation, not to be appeased but by blood ! Thy worship has been worthy of the idol ; the dungeon has been thy chosen temple, instruments of torture thy means of instruction, the stake thy eloquence, and thy piety the abolition of all human sympathy.—*Southwood Smith.*

VIII. Instances of Superstition in the Case of Criminals.

[11940] The Italian bandit, who has a regular confessor attached to his gang, and who devotes a fixed proportion of his booty to the altar of the Madonna ; the Greek, who will stab a man without hesitation, but would shudder at the thought of touching cheese and butter after Sexagesima Sunday, illustrate this temper of mind, whose most noteworthy examples are found in superstitious criminals like Louis XI. and Henry III. of France.—*Contemporary Review.*

IX. The Contrast between the Spirit of Superstition and of Religion.

1 **The presence of the superstitious or the religious element in our notions, feelings, and worship depends on the idea we have formed to ourselves of the transcendent power before which we bow.**

[11941] Superstition is the fear of a spirit whose passions are those of a man, whose acts are the acts of a man ; who is present in some places, and not in others ; who is kind to one person, not to another ; who is pleased or angry according to the degree of attention you pay to him ; who is hostile generally to human pleasure, but may be bribed by sacrifice of a part of that pleasure into permitting the rest. This, whatever form of faith it colours, is the hue of superstition. But religion, on the contrary, is the belief in a Spirit whose mercies are over all His works, who is kind even to the unthankful and the evil ; who is everywhere present, and therefore is in no place to be sought and in no place to be evaded ; a Spirit therefore whose eternal benevolence cannot be angered, whose laws are everlasting and inexorable, so that heaven and earth must indeed pass away if one jot of them failed—laws which attach to every wrong and error a measured inevitable penalty ; to every rightness and prudence an assured reward—penalty of which the remittance cannot be purchased, and reward of which the promise cannot be broken.

X. Its Connection with Unbelief.

1 **They are opposite symptoms of the same fundamental evil, of which one passes easily into the other.**

[11942] When once the inner life is become thoroughly worldly, it either suppresses all religious feeling and abandons itself to infidelity, or, blending itself with that feeling, gives to it an interpretation of its own, and thus turns it to superstition. The desperation of unbelief surrenders the troubled conscience a prey to superstition ; and the irrationality of superstition

makes religion suspected by the thoughtful mind.—*Dr. Neander.*

2 The relative perniciousness of superstition and unbelief.

[11943] It were better to have no opinion of God at all than such an opinion as is unworthy of Him; for the one is unbelief, the other is contumely; and certainly superstition is the reproach of the Deity. Plutarch saith well to that purpose: "Surely," saith he, "I had rather a great deal men should say there was no such man at all as Plutarch, than that they should say that there was one Plutarch that would eat his children as soon as they were born," as the poets speak of Saturn.—*Bacon.*

[11944] I would rather dwell in the dim fog of superstition than in air rarefied to nothing by the air-pump of unbelief, in which the panting breast expires, vainly and convulsively gasping for breath.—*Richter.*

49

CARNAL-MINDEDNESS.

I. Its Real Nature and Evil Consequences.

1 It means an incapacity to appreciate spiritual and heavenly things.

[11945] A carnal mind apprehendeth not a suitableness in the spiritual and heavenly things to his mind, and therefore he sets light by them. When you tell him of everlasting glory, he heareth you as if you were persuading him to go play with the sun; they are matters of another world, and out of his element; and therefore he hath no more delight in them than a fish would have to be in the fairest meadow, or than a swine hath in a jewel, or a dog in a piece of gold: they may be good to others, but he cannot apprehend them as suitable to him, because he hath a nature that is otherwise inclined; he savoureth not of the things of the spirit (Rom. viii. 5).—*Baxter.*

[11946] The ways of religion are not, and cannot be, pleasant to an irreligious man. Light affords no pleasure to the blind, nor music to the deaf, nor labour to the lazy. Those very things which the spiritual mind most relishes and desires are to the carnal mind distasteful and offensive.—*Bunting.*

2 In its refined, no less than in its gross forms, it means exclusion of God.

[11947] The carnal mind, which is enmity, fortifies the soul against God as with bars and doors; averts it from Him; carries with it a horrid, guilty consciousness, which fills it with despair and rage, and enwraps it in the blackness of darkness for ever.—*Howe.*

[11948] The carnal mind is the life of sense, by which is not meant sensuality or immorality, but acquiescence in this present state as such, without any thought or desire of a change; loving and adhering to the world, and full of relish for earthly enjoyments and earthly comforts, and the means of procuring them. If this be the prevailing habit and temper of our minds God is fatally excluded, let a man think what he will of himself, or what fair appearances soever he may make in religion.—*T. Adams.*

3 It means steady recession from God's people.

[11949] The carnally-minded sink downward, ever receding from Christians in their tastes and aspirations until in the future world there will be a gulf wide as immensity between them.

4 It means enmity, open or latent, to God.

[11950] It is charged, not that every man has come to a flagrant outbreak in opposition to the Divine Being, but that every man has elements that are opposed to the Divine Being which, the moment he is brought to a realization of God's authority, will develop their real character.—*Beecher.*

[11951] The carnal mind not only *has* but *is* enmity against God. Enmity is of its very nature, as of grass to be green, or sugar to be sweet, or vinegar to be sour. If it were not so, man would not need to be born again to get a new heart; like a watch that had but started a jewel, or lost a tooth of a wheel, it were enough to be repaired without being renewed.—*Guthrie.*

[11952] This enmity is latent in the carnal mind, as fire is latent in the flint. Strike it, and out there flashes what was always in the cold and seeming harmless stone.

50

ENMITY AGAINST GOD.

I. Its Reality, Nature, and Rationale.

[11953] There is no doctrine worldly men refuse more generally to receive, and too many Christians, alas! try to tone down! "There is some good in every heart." "We honour God and do not hate Him." But it is to be remembered—(1) Carnal men judge of their state, not as it is really, but by what they consider their best times, when the mind is not disturbed or ruffled But what do they feel when reproved for sin? when charged with rebellion against God? when His claims are pressed upon the conscience? when a sacrifice is demanded for God? (2) The enmity of the natural heart is not against God as God; not a personal enmity, but a dislike of His government and control. It is not against God as Creator and Preserver,

but as Sovereign and Judge. (3) The enmity of the natural heart is not against God, according to the false character men frequently picture to themselves ; but against God as set forth in His own word. There is no enmity roused by the dream of a God all mercy and all goodness, who would never interfere with the sinner's will, except to pity and pardon its perversity. It is against a God of holiness, of justice, and of truth, that enmity is stirred. (4) The enmity of the natural heart is not perceptible in every action or every thought. True, every action of the natural man is the action of an enemy, but it may not be done with a consciousness of enmity. Carnal men often seek to please God by breaking from sin, by self-denial, &c. But "a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." (5) Feelings and actions are neither of them the truest tests of the heart. There cannot be true love without the desire to please, but there may be the desire to please where there is no true love. On the other hand, increased enmity to the truth is often the last struggle before the surrender of the heart to Christ.—*G. S. Bowes.*

[11954] We are apt to wonder at the excessive wickedness of the ancient Jews at certain eras in their history, and their tendency to idolatry in the midst of the light which they enjoyed. Possibly we may find an explanation in the very number and nature of the privileges possessed by them. They may have felt that God was too near them—that the light was too oppressive ; and hence their disposition to retreat to darkened groves, in which a false worship transacted its rites. We suspect, in particular, that it was the very propinquity and purity of the holiness of Jesus that so irritated the spirit of His persecutors. We may account, on the same principle, for the circumstance, not unfrequently occurring, of the son of pious parents, educated in a religious home, hating all that is spiritual with a malignity above that of other men. If not disposed to yield to it, he will just loathe it all the more from the contests which he has had with it. And hence, also, the opposition to spiritual truth on the part of some on whom it has been earnestly pressed. Those who have long resisted it will come positively to nauseate it, as the wicked do a faithful monitor who speaks plainly of their faults. "I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil."—*President M'Cosh.*

II. Its Symptoms and Signs.

[11955] It is manifested by (1) Prejudice ; obstinate and wilful blindness ; unwillingness to inquire into truth, and be convicted of error (Saul of Tarsus). (2) Self-will ; direct opposition to the revealed will of the Almighty (Psa. xii. 4 ; l. 17 ; Jer. xviii. 12). (3) Rebellion. Refusing to acknowledge Christ as Lord (Luke xix. 14; Rom. vii. 23). (4) Persecution, open or secret ; shown in the jest, taunt, ridicule, oppression ; fighting against the truth, even to the death of the witnesses. (5) Resistance of reproof, even the kindest and most gentle. (6) Dislike in being called to sacrifice any object of desire, pleasure, &c.

III. Its Subterfuges.

[11956] Worldly men generally disguise their enmity against God under the pretence of hatred to His people's sins, and especially of their hypocrisy. But really it is against God, and against the shadow of piety which is hidden in hypocrisy.

51

IMPENITENCE.

I. Its Madness.

[11957] A man has a cancer. The doctor tells him he cannot live long—that by and by it will involve the great arteries, and then he will bleed to death. And what would you think of him if he gave no heed to the physician's words, but went on as if nothing fatal was the matter with him, and laughed and joked, knowing that death was creeping nearer and nearer, and that ere long the blood-vessel would be opened and his life would flow away? And what shall we think of the madness of those who go on in their impenitence utterly regardless of the disease which is hurrying them to perdition?—*Beecher (adapted).*

II. Its Heinousness.

[11958] It evinces more depravity not to repent of a sin than it does to commit it. Even a good man may be hurried into sin, but he will invariably repent of it afterwards. To deny as Peter did is bad ; but not to weep bitterly when we have denied is worse.

III. Its Deleterious Effects.

[11959] The heart that hardens in crime decays just as iron consumes with rust upon it. —*St. Basil.*

IV. Exemplification of its most Obdurate Form in the Case of Israel.

[11960] Israel charged with impenitence by the prophets. 1. Refused to be ashamed (Jer. iii. 3). 2. Made their heart like adamant (Zech. vii. 12). 3. Refused to return (Jer. v. 3). 4. Were obstinate (Isa. xlviii. 4). 5. Not at all ashamed, and could not blush for their sin (Jer. viii. 12).

V. Description of the Impenitent or Stony Heart.

[11961] Near by a stone, in a mass of rock that had fallen from some overhanging crag, we

once came upon an adder, as it lay in ribbon coil basking on the sunny ground. At our approach the reptile stirred, uncoiled itself, and, hissing, gave signs of battle. Attacked, it retreated, and, making for that gray stone, wormed itself into a hole in its side. Its nest and home were there. And, looking on that sheltered rock, the home and nest of the adder, it seemed to me a fitting emblem of that heart which the Bible describes as a heart of stone.—*Dr. Guthrie.*

VI. The Misuse of the Case of the Penitent Thief.

[11962] Thousands have excused their impenitence by the example of the thief upon the cross. He repented at the last, why may not they? The feeling may not have formed itself into words (the subtlest deceptions seldom do), but it is there. The thief was saved at the eleventh hour, why may not I? But there is a vital difference between his case and yours. 1. The circumstances in which he was placed were altogether exceptional; and 2. We are not told that he was a procrastinator; 3. If he repented at the last the other did not. As the old divines used to say, "One was saved, that none might despair; but only one, that none might presume."

VII. Homiletical Hints.

[11963] An impenitent heart is one which—1. Has not repented. 2. Is not easily brought to repentance. 3. Is unwilling to repent. 4. Is unable to repent. 5. This is the dreadful state to which impenitence, if persisted in, inevitably leads (Heb. vi. 6).—*Van Doren.*

[11964] Impenitence (1) is a sign of an ungrateful, hardened, obstinate heart. (2) It grows upon the man who persists in it until the soul becomes deaf and callous to all the calls and appeals of Divine mercy. (3) It leads to final and irrevocable and terrible ruin.

52

REJOICING IN EVIL.

I. Its Source.

[11965] It is greatly to be feared that those persons never mourned for their own sins who can rejoice at other people's.

II. Its Heinousness.

[11966] He that rejoices in the fall of his brother rejoices in the devil's victory.—*St. Ambrose.*

[11967] One would think them, indeed, but half men, and scarce any Christians, that can allow themselves so inhuman and unhallowed a pleasure as rejoicing in another's sin. It is very unworthy of a man to take pleasure in seeing his fellow-man turning beast. There is little in it of the ingenuity that belongs to human nature, to delight in the harms of others; much less of the prudence, to make sport of a common mischief. And would a Christian rejoice in the disadvantages of his own cause, and in the dishonour and reproach of the very name which he himself bears?—*Howe.*

53

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS.

I. Its Nature and Description.

[11968] Not (1) intellectual ignorance, even of Scripture truth; not want of intellectual power. Carnal men are often distinguished for critical acumen and theological learning, and yet are spiritually blind as Saul of Tarsus before his conversion (Acts xxvi. 9; Rom. ii. 19). (2) Absence of all moral feeling. Feeling may exist where the conscience is perverted, as in most persecutors of the church. What then? Blindness is the absence of faith, as faith is the inner sense of spiritual sight, the illuminating faculty, wrought upon efficaciously by the Holy Spirit. *Illustration:* There is a sight of the mind and heart, as well as of the natural eye. Cf. the picture of a dead child, as viewed by an unconcerned stranger and a disconsolate mother; or the ivy-covered walls of an old ruin, as seen by a ploughboy and an artist.

[11969] The men of this world are like moles, which can see well underground, but when brought unexpectedly to the light they are blind. So are the most cunning and crafty men as regards the things of this world blind to those things which require spiritual discernment (1 Cor. ii. 14).

[11970] St. Peter said of wicked men that they are *purblind*, "they cannot see afar off." They can see nothing but that which is next them, and therefore no marvel if their thoughts cannot reach unto the end of the creature. There is in a dim eye the same constant and habitual indisposition which sometimes happeneth unto a sound eye by reason of a thick mist; though a man be walking in a very short lane, yet he sees no end of it; and so a natural man cannot reach to the period of earthly things. Death and danger are still a great way out of his sight. —*Bp. Reynolds.*

II. Its Rationale.

[11971] It is easy to exclude the noontide by closing the eyes, and it is easy to resist the clearest truth by hardening the heart against it. —*Keith.*

III. CAUSES.

[11972] 1. The depravation of our fallen nature, blinding our understanding. 2. The power and malice of "the God of this world" (2 Cor. iv. 4). 3. The influence of the lusts of sin: prejudice, passions, covetousness. A guinea held before the eye shuts out the mid-day sun (1 John iii. 11). 4. God's judgments (Isa. vi. 10). It was an ancient custom to put a vail on the face before execution.

IV. ITS DREADFULNESS.

[11973] It would be a dreadful thing to me to lose my sight, but I should do as other blind men have done before me—I should take God's rod and staff for my guide and comfort, and wait patiently for death to bring better light to nobler eyes. Oh, ye who are living in the darkness of sin, turn before it is too late to the light of holiness! Earthly blindness can be borne, for it is but for a day; but who could bear to be blind through eternity?—*Beecher.*

V. ITS CONSEQUENCES.

[11974] 1. It deprives the sinner of the most important knowledge of good and evil. 2. It leads to the greatest misery. 3. It ends in eternal death.—*G. S. Bowes.*

[11975] 1. It deprives a man of important means of knowledge. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." 2. It denies him a grand source of enjoyment: the blessedness of seeing God, of looking unto Jesus, of perceiving the sunshine of a Father's love. 3. It unfits him for the proper discharge of his duties; can never rightly serve God or man.—*W. Kirkman (condensed).*

VI. ITS HEINOUSNESS.

[11976] No blindness is so sad as spiritual blindness, because it is—(1) Birth blindness; therefore of the worst kind. Many kinds of blindness *may* be cured: snow blindness, colour blindness, blindness from disease. But birth blindness no human skill can cure (John ix. 1, 32). (2) Unconscious, or disallowed; like the Pharisees (John ix. 40); the Laodiceans (Rev. iii. 17). Blind sinners say, "We know all that." "Are we blind?" (3) Wilful: blind sinners shut their eyes, and in the full blaze of gospel light resist the remedy, and prefer darkness to light (John iii. 19, 20). Not like the blindness of excusable ignorance. "None so blind as those that will not see." (4) Culpable: "Pity a poor blind man." If physically blind, a just plea. But sin is not a misfortune, but a fault; and wilful guilt deserves not pity, but condemnation.

VII. CONDITIONS OF SPIRITUAL VISION.

1 They are the same as the bodily.

[11977] There must be a medium through which objects are discerned. Sight is the medium for the natural eye. For the soul's eye, God in the gospel and by His Spirit is the medium of perception. "The Lord God is a sun." "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." "I," says Jesus, "am the light of the world." "That is the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "He shall take of the things of mine, and show them unto you." "The light of the glorious gospel of Christ."—*Study.*

[11978] This medium must be clear and pure. All objects seen through a red glass are red in appearance; and through a green glass they are green. So a corruption of the light of God gives false views of spiritual objects.—*Ibid.*

[11979] There must be objects of vision. The eye and light are naught without them. The objects of the material eye are material. The objects of the spiritual eye are spiritual. What are the objects of spiritual vision? They are holiness, purity, love, sympathy, benevolence, truthfulness, sincerity, and their opposites, as manifested in God and in human beings.—*Ibid.*

[11980] The eye is a delicate and sensitive organ, and may be easily destroyed by violence, by misusage, and just as effectually by no use. There are animals in the dark Mammoth cave, all eyeless; not only blind, but the eye itself has disappeared; although the same kind of animals around the cave have good eyes: absolute disuse of them has eliminated them from the body. So the eye of the soul may be put out or destroyed. This soul-blindness is brought on by suffering a wicked, depraved heart to turn us aside. The worldly god of bodily passions and appetites may make one blind to spiritual things. The votary of pleasure, of the cup, of lust, of sensuality in any form, can see no beauty in holiness and purity of heart. The frequenter of the dance-hall, of the theatre, of the gin-shop, has no perception of the joy of a holy love.

The worldly god of a depraved mind may put out this spiritual eye. The miser, greedy for gain, sees no beauty in spiritual things. He sees gold, but he sees no charm in benevolence. He has no perception of the sweetness of philanthropy or self-sacrifice as exhibited in the life of Jesus. The votary of a vaulting ambition can see no attraction in humility and gentleness and charity. This worldly god has blinded the eye of his mind.—*Ibid.*

[11981] Or soul-blindness may be brought on by entire inattention. Never attempting to use this eye, it is paralyzed by neglect, being absorbed in the contemplation of worldly objects, perhaps in their most innocent and beautiful forms. The man of science, of art, of worldly enterprise, may be so all-absorbed in those pursuits, that he not only loses the vision of spiritual things, but his power of vision. His spiritual eye is destroyed, and he becomes spiritually blind.—*Ibid.*

VIII. Christ's Mission in the Opening of the Eyes of the Blind.

[11982] Christ's mission (or the mission of Christianity) is to open the eyes of the blind (Acts xxvi. 18). This expression "to open their eyes" implies three things: (1) Man's spiritual blindness as a sinner. (2) The restorative character of Christianity does not give men new eyes but opens the old ones. (3) The genuineness of Christ as a reformer. The design of an impostor is to close men's eyes.—*Dr. Thomas.*

54

UNBELIEF.

I. Its Meaning and that of its Synonyms.

[11983] Disbelief and unbelief (Sax. *lefan*, *lyfan*, to allow or permit) are thus differenced: unbelief is negative, disbelief is positive. One may have unbelief from want of knowledge, but disbelief rejects as false. Unbelief is the absence, disbelief the refusal of credit.

Incredulity (Lat. *in*, not, and *credulus*, from *credere*, to believe) and infidelity (*in*, not, and *fides*, faith) are used, the former to signify absence of belief where it is *possible*, the latter absence of belief where belief is *right*. Incredulity may be, therefore, right where it denotes a rightful reluctance of assent to what ought not to be easily believed, or not believed at all. Infidelity is by the force of the term wrong. It has the further sense of a breach of faith in matters not of belief, but practice—where those matters depend upon contract or promise.—*C. J. Smith.*

[11984] There is no greater mistake in the world than to suppose that we believe what we do not disbelieve. The common state with many of us is to do neither the one nor the other. Neither to think that Christ's word is true, nor yet that it is false; but to think nothing at all about it. But this is truly unbelief—truly, and in the scriptural sense of unbelief; because, although neither our tongue nor our understanding consciously says that Christ's word is false, yet our whole being says so daily; it gives its witness against Christ's truth, silently indeed, but quite decisively.—*T. Arnold, D.D.*

II. Its Root and Origin.

1 It is the practical outcome of a wicked life.

[11985] Our Saviour makes frequent allusion to the fact that unbelief has not an intellectual so much as a moral root. He does not admit that the light is insufficient: He declares that its beams are unwelcome. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and that men love darkness rather than light *because their deeds are evil.*"—*E. Mellor.*

[11986] Some childish unfaithfulness to grace has often laid the foundation of the unbelief of maturer years.—*Pusey.*

[11987] It is the last judgment of God upon the soul which will not live as it believes, that in the end it believes as it lives.—*Ibid.*

[11988] Unbelief is a languid atmosphere of doubt, in which everything is alike uncertain; everything alike mean, worthless, earthly: the disbelief in goodness itself, and truth itself, which, like a pestilential malaria, rises from the sloughs of a wicked life.

[11989] For the man who does not expect that he shall rise again, and give an account of the things which he has done, will not quickly apply himself to virtue; and, from not applying himself to virtue, will in turn come to disbelieve the resurrection entirely; for both these are established by each other—vice by unbelief, and unbelief by vice. For the conscience filled with many wickednesses, fearing and trembling for the recompense to come, and not willing to provide itself with comfort by changing to what is most excellent, is fain to repose in unbelief.—*St. Chrysostom.*

2 It is ultimately traceable to self-sufficiency and self-righteousness.

[11990] Why does a man refuse to believe? Because he has confidence in himself; because he has not a sense of his own sins; because he has not love in his heart to his Lord and Saviour. Unbelief men are responsible for. Unbelief is criminal because it is a moral act—an act of the whole nature. Belief or unbelief is a test of a man's whole spiritual condition, just because it is the whole being, affections, will, conscience, and all, as well as the understanding, which are concerned in it.—*Alexander Maclaren.*

III. Its Developments.

1 Its two chief developments.

[11991] These are—(1) Disbelieving; refusing to believe God's testimony, especially about gospel truths. (2) Doubting; the personal application to ourselves of what is allowed to be true to others.

IV. Its Relative Danger.

[11992] There is an unbelief of the heart equally dangerous to salvation as that of the mind. A man who obstinately refuses belief, after all the proofs of religion, is a monster whom we contemplate with horror; but a Christian who believes, and yet lives as though he believed not, is a madman, whose folly sur-

passeth comprehension : the one procures his condemnation, like a man desperate ; the other carelessly allows himself to be carried down by the waves, and thinks that he is thereby saving himself. Make your faith, then, certain by your good works ; and if you shudder at the very name of an infidel, have the same horror at yourselves, seeing we are taught by faith that the destiny of the wicked Christian shall not be different from his, and that his lot shall be the same as that of the unbeliever. Live conformably to what you believe. Such is the faith of the righteous, and the only one to which the eternal promises have been made. —*Massillon.*

V. The Various Forms and Ramifications of its Subtle Spirit.

[11993] These are—(1) Atheism, discarding its former audacity of blasphemy, assuming now a modest garb and mendicant whine, asking our pity for its idiosyncrasy, bewailing its misfortune in not being able to believe there is a God. (2) Rationalism, whether in the transcendentalism of Hegel, or in the allegorizing impiety of Strauss, or in the pantheistic philosophy of Fichte, eating out the heart of the gospel, into which its vampire fangs have fastened. (3) Latitudinarianism, on a sentimental journey in search of the religious instinct, doling out its equal and niggard praise to it wherever it is found, in Fetishism, Thuggism, Mohammedism, or Christianity — that species of active and high-sounding scepticism which, for want of a better name, we may call a Credophobia, which selects the confessions and catechisms as the objects of its especial hostility, and which, knowing right well that if the banner is down the courage fails, and the army will be routed or slain, "furious as a wounded bull runs tearing at the creeds"—these, with all their offshoots and dependencies (for their name is Legion) grouped under the generic style of infidelity, have girt themselves for the combat, and are asserting and endeavouring to establish their empire over the intellects and consciences of men. And as this spirit of unbelief has many sympathies with the spirit of superstition, they have entered into unholy alliance—"Herod and Pilate have been made friends together"—and, hand joined in hand, they are arrayed against the truth of God.—*Dr. Punshon.*

VI. Signs and Symptoms of the Unbelief of Believers.

[11994] The unbelief of believers discovers itself in a faint, languid, and timorous way of believing, as if the ground they stand upon were not able to bear them. Much like a man walking upon weak ice, though he ventures his weight upon it, yet every moment he is afraid lest the ice break underneath him and leave him in the deep.—*E. Erskine.*

VII. The Usual Primary Step in the Course of Unbelief of the Mind.

1 Well-nigh every heresy has begun in some a priori notion as to God, in Himself or in His ways towards us.

[11995] These *à priori* notions have been superficial, as well as impatient and unsubmissive. Instead of thinking "What has God said?" men have said in their hearts, "God could not have meant this." They judge beforehand what could or could not be the mind of Almighty God. And what they thus think that God could not reveal, that to which their minds are energetically opposed, that they will not receive. If they can detach it from the revelation, they will receive the residue, to which they do not object. If they cannot detach it, they reject the whole. But whether they accept or reject the residue, the principle of unsubmission is still the same. They make themselves judges of what is fit for God. They will not allow Him to reveal what they do not like. In vain God says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts ; neither are your ways My ways." They make their own notions the criterion of the mind of God, not the revealed mind of God the corrective of their own thoughts.—*Pusey.*

[This line of argument has not infrequently been pressed too far, in order to enforce submission to doctrines which "are not revealed in the Scriptures, nor can be proved thereby."

VIII. Extreme Danger of Unbelief in Regarding any one Article of Truth.

1 To part with one point of faith is to part with the faith itself.

[11996] This is a characteristic of all who have parted with faith, that they began with some one point. They parted, as they thought, with one point of faith ; the event showed that they parted with the faith itself. And this is the more illustrative because those first points of deflection would often not seem at first sight to have been cardinal points. St. Augustine relates how one tormented by flies fell through impatience into the snare of the Manichee, and came to deny that man also was the work of the good God. The pantheism of Protestant Germany began in the denial of the possessions by devils related in the Gospels. A disbelief in the doctrine of transmission of original sin, even amid the acknowledgment of the fact of man's own evil, has been the prelude to pantheism. Satan skilfully adapts his temptations to the peculiar structure of each mind. In faith, as in morals, "the cost is in the first step." The rest follow. But the very variety of the points, whence the parting with the actual faith began, shows the more that that on which the whole issue turned was not the specialty of the point of faith itself, but the fact that the unhappy man did part with what was of faith.—*Ibid.*

IX. Its Nature and Effects.

1 It is an affirmation of antagonism to the Divinity.

[11997] Take now unbelief in Christ, and see what the rejection of Him implies. Whatever excuses a man may make for committing sin, he knows that it creates an alienation from God, that its effects on the soul are blasting and devastating, that it is a power bringing him into antagonism with God, and into opposing contact with His eternal laws. Its history, like the battle track of an enemy, is one of deformity and ruin. There is no getting over this, no explaining it away; it is a fixed unalterable fact of consciousness. Now the cross stands as the sign of reconciliation and reunion with God, and therefore of healing, and peace, and blessedness. Christ came to renovate what sin had ruined; to bear the "curse of the law;" to blot out "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, and take it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." But by unbelief in Him, by refusing His deliverance, I affirm my antagonism to the Divine. Within me is a power flashing out now and then in sinful action; I claim that as the personal *me* by refusing to be delivered. Before me lies an unknown and awful future as the inevitable sequence of sin; I dare its mystery by refusing to be delivered. By unbelief in Christ I say deliberately, "I am against God, and choose to remain so; I accept the sleeping retribution of bygone years, I am content to risk a future irradiated by no star of hope." There is the revelation of sin. Man defying the supremest love; for Christ appeals to him by all the powers of love and sorrow, "becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," and man rejects them. To the Christ of the Garden and the Cross he affirms, "I care not for Thee; I am against Thee." There—in the resolute defiance of the loving and pitying God by the frail child of yesterday, is the essential horror and blasphemy of sin. Thus, beyond all sense of an evil nature, or guilty actions, or fear of penalties, unbelief in Christ stands out as a manifestation of sin; and when, by the touch of God's Spirit, the cross of Christ is thus revealed, we realize the meaning of the words, "He shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not on Me."—*E. L. Hull, B.A.*

2 It is a want of the necessary receptivity on man's part for the enjoyment of gospel blessings.

[11998] An empty vessel capable of holding water, if tightly corked, none can enter it, though water is poured upon it in great abundance; nay, it may be thrown into the sea, and still remain empty. So is it with our hearts. Unbelief closes them so that the water of life cannot fill them, however abundantly it may be poured upon and around us.—*Foster.*

3 It flattens the level of life and every aspiration.

[11999] No matter where the sceptical thought originates, or how it gets access to our minds, we see at once that it makes our character less vigorous. The gospel is not simply a philosophy of religion or law of life, but it is an apocalypse, showing the heavens to our thought, and so bringing its spiritual benedictions to every heart and life.—*R. S. Storrs.*

4 It excludes a believer from the enjoyment of many a privilege.

[12000] Israel could not enter Canaan because of their unbelief. There is many a promised land from which we are excluded for the same reason. For instance, how many of us enjoy the "perfect peace" which is the privilege of the true believer? How many of us have got beyond "hoping" we are saved and "trusting" we are forgiven? They which have believed "do enter into rest." But this Canaan is denied to the only half-believer. He is like a foolish child lingering on a cold, wintry, tempestuous night out in the snow and the wind, while all is warm and tranquil at the fireside within—the supper spread for him, and a vacant seat placed at table ready for him—because he cannot bring himself fully to believe that if he lifted the latch he would receive instant and joyful welcome.—*J. Halsey.*

5 It is a destitution of that without which the spiritual life cannot be sustained.

[12001] As well expect a bird to sing under a receiver from which the air has been almost entirely exhausted, as expect real goodness from him who is destitute of faith in God.—*Shepherd.*

6 It is the occasion of all sin, and the very bond of iniquity.

[12002] It does nothing but darken and destroy. It makes the world a moral desert, where no Divine footsteps are heard, where no angels ascend and descend, where no living hand adorns the fields, feeds the fowls of heaven, or regulates events. Thus it makes nature, the garden of God, a mere automaton, and the history of Providence a fortuitous succession of events; a man a creature of accidents, and prayer a useless ceremony. It annihilates even the vestiges of heaven that still remain upon the earth, and stops the way to every higher region.—*Krummacher.*

X. Its Powerlessness.

[12003] Our belief or disbelief of a thing does not alter the nature of a thing. We cannot fancy things into being, or make them vanish into nothing, by the stubborn confidence of our imaginations. Things are as sullen as we are, and will be what they are whatever we think of them. And if there be a God, a man cannot by an obstinate disbelief of Him make Him cease to be, any more than a man can put out the sun by winking.—*Abp. Tillotson.*

XI. Its Sinfulness.

[12004] The advocates of liberalism often

complain that Christians, when they speak of the sinfulness of unbelief, assume a prerogative which does not rightfully belong to them—that of judging the heart; and that, in ascribing unbelief to a hatred of truth, or a disposition to cherish immoral passions, and continue in immoral habits, they are equally unjust and uncharitable. The orthodox, it is said, "assert that belief results from the state of the heart, and that, if this be right, belief will inevitably follow. This is simply false in fact. How many excellent, virtuous, and humble minds, in all ages, have been anxious, but unable to believe; have prayed earnestly for belief, and suffered bitterly for disbelief—in vain! The most orthodox believer may have much sympathy with sad, serious, earnest, thoughtful doubt, for it is not improbable that, in the earlier stages of his progress, he may have felt the same; but his own experience has taught him that such doubt did not arise from the want of sufficient evidence, and that it did arise from some other cause of a less justifiable kind. He, too, has felt the rising pride of intellect, as opposed to authority, the inveterate power of natural ungodliness, the instinctive aversion to spiritual truth, the revulsion of feeling, the absolute loathing and disgust, occasioned by some of the peculiar doctrines of revelation, which are more or less experienced by every unrenewed mind, when it is first brought into close contact with the gospel message: and if he now sees cause to condemn these feelings in himself, and to confess that they were sinful, his experience should be sufficient to teach him the lesson of forbearance and tenderness towards all sincere inquirers after truth who are now passing through similar trials. But he would belie his deepest convictions, founded on the testimony of Scripture, and confirmed by the experience of his own heart, if he should treat either unbelief, or the causes from which it springs, as sinless or indifferent. He feels as Arnold felt when he said, "I am learning to think more and more how unbelief is at the bottom of all our evil," and cannot regard that as innocent which is at once the product and the prolific cause of sin.—*J. Buchanan.*

[12005] Belief is, and should be, determined by evidence; unbelief may spring from other causes than the want or the weakness of evidence. There can be no vision without light; but there may be light where there is no vision, as in the case of blindness; or where there is distorted vision, as in the case of jaundice; or where there is painful vision, as in the case of a diseased eye, which the purest light serves only to irritate and inflame. Food is essential to the support of life, but disease may arise from other causes than the want or even the insufficient supply of food, and a diseased stomach will loathe and reject the most wholesome nourishment. In like manner, belief may depend on evidence, and yet unbelief may arise from other causes than the want of it. When it is said that "if the evidence presented is sufficient, belief will follow as a necessary consequence, and that if it does not follow, this can only arise from the evidence adduced being insufficient,"—this statement, which is equally applicable to atheistic and deistic unbelief, makes no distinction between the existence of evidence, and our perception of it, or the treatment which we bestow upon it. It may be true that, in some cases, such as the rejection of Paganism or Mohammedanism, unbelief may not be the "natural or logical indication" of a love of darkness in preference to light, but may arise from independent causes, such as the want or weakness of evidence; yet it is equally true that, in the case of Christianity, unbelief may arise neither from the want nor the weakness of its evidence, but from an indisposition to consider it, from an unfair and uncandid treatment of it, from a repugnance to admit the authoritative claims of revelation, or an aversion to its pure and spiritual truths, and to the moral restraints which these truths, if believed, must necessarily impose. Christianity does not require belief without evidence; on the contrary, it offers evidence of the Divine authority of Scripture, and, that being established, it offers God's testimony as an infallible proof of every truth contained in it. It recognizes the fact that, according to the laws of our mental constitution, the understanding is, and should be, determined and ruled by evidence; and it assumes that the evidence which it offers is sufficient—not, indeed, to command the attention, or to compel the assent of all men, but to afford a solid foundation for belief in the case of those who will.—*Ibid.*

XII. The Relation between Unbelief and Despair.

[12006] Unbelief among sins is as the plague among diseases, the most dangerous; but when it riseth to despair then it is as the plague, with the tokens appearing that bring the certain message of death with them. Unbelief is despair in the bud; despair is unbelief at its full growth.—*A Divine of the 17th Century.*

[12007] "I seem," says Hume, "affrighted and confounded by the solitude in which I am placed by my philosophy. When I look abroad on every side I see dispute, contradiction, and distraction. When I turn my eye inward I find nothing but doubt and ignorance. Where am I, or what am I? From what cause do I derive my existence? To what condition shall I return? I am confounded with questions; I begin to fancy myself in a very deplorable condition, surrounded with darkness on every side."

XIII. Homiletical Hints

[12008] This tendency to unbelief is (1) fearfully prevalent; (2) philosophically absurd; (3) morally reprehensible; (4) spiritually pernicious.—*Dr. Thomas.*

55

UNGODLINESS.

I. Explanation of Terms respecting some of its Forms.

[12009] Irreligious is negative. Impious and profane are positive (Lat. *pro*, without, and *fanum*, the temple, literally excluded from religious mysteries). A man under no influence of religion is irreligious. When applied to things, however, it implies a tendency to be unfavourable to religion, though without of necessity a premeditated determination or desire to be so. Impious denotes a defiant irreligion, and a disposition to do dishonour to what religious men hold in veneration, especially as regards the character, works, or dealings of the Supreme Being. As impious relates more commonly to the thoughts, so profane to the words or acts of men. Profanity is irreverence in speech about sacred things. It may be observed that profane has the milder sense, also, of secular, or not distinctively religious, as history may be divided into sacred and profane. Impious thoughts; irreligious persons or books; profane language. —*C. J. Smith.*

II. Its Universality and Guilt.

1 Every human soul is chargeable with his sin.

[12010] Other sins are committed by individual men, some are addicted to one class of sins, and others to another; but this offence seems to be universal. All are not malevolent or selfish; all are not intemperate or deceitful; all are not proud and ambitious; but all seem to be ungodly. Other sins may be only occasional, but this sin seems to be perpetual and abiding, and rendering all men guilty at all times, even when they are cherishing thoughts and feelings which in themselves are praiseworthy. Does any man stand up and say, I was in a virtuous state at such and such a time, when I was defending the helpless, and relieving the destitute? We admit at once that these actions in themselves are becoming, as becoming as those of the disobedient son showing kindness to his companions; of the unjust man practising hospitality; of the slaveholder supplying his slaves with excellent food; of the husband providing handsomely for a wife abandoned; or of the conspirator sending a notice fitted to frustrate the conspiracy to which he was a party. If we could judge these acts apart from the agent, we should unhesitatingly approve of them. Nay, we do approve of the acts, but we never for one instant approve of the agent.

III. Its Misery.

[12011] If thou dost persist and continue in ungodliness it will finally sink and oppress thee under the unsupportable weight of His wrath, and make thee so weary of thyself that thou shalt wish a thousand times thou hadst never been, and will render thee so perfectly miserable that thou wouldst esteem it a great happiness to change thy condition with the most wretched and forlorn that ever lived upon the earth, to be perpetually upon a rack, and so to lie down for ever under the rage of all the most violent diseases and pains that ever afflicted mankind.—*Abp. Tillotson.*

IV. The Regular Delusion of the Ungodly respecting the Nature of their Course.

[12012] Of all the ingenious mistakes into which the ungodly have fallen, perhaps none have been so pernicious in their consequences, or have brought so many evils into the world, as the popular opinion that the way of the transgressors is pleasant and easy.—*H. Ballon.*

56

FRUITLESSNESS.

I. Its Real Explanation.

1 It means a defective or dead faith.

[12013] If you come to look on plants, if you find there no fruit nor no leaves, you say this plant is dead. So take a jewel, and when it comes to the touch-stone, or any way that you try it, you say it is fair, but it is a counterfeit jewel, it is a false diamond, or whatsoever it be. If you come to take a dram of physic, if you take a drug, if it do not work. Take leaven and put it into your dough: if it sour not the lump, you say it is dead leaven, it is a counterfeit thing. So I say, if thou find not in faith this effect, this operation upon thy heart—that it works not this general change in thee, that it fires not thy soul with love to Christ; if thou find not life in it, and that it bring forth such fruits; if thou find it not grow, that it put another taste upon the whole soul, that it leavens it throughout—know that thou art deceived, rest not in it, cast it away, get a right faith such as will not deceive thee.

II. Its Special Feature.

1 Omitted commission of good.

[12014] The very not doing good is in itself doing evil. Tell me, if thou hadst a servant who should neither steal nor insult thee, who, moreover, should keep from drunkenness and every other kind of vice, and yet should sit perpetually in idleness, and not doing one of those duties which a servant owes to his master, wouldest thou not chastise him? wouldest thou not put him to the rack? Doubtless thou wilt say, I would. And yet, forsooth, he has done no evil. No, but this is in itself doing evil.

But let us, if you please, apply this to other cases in life. Suppose, then, that of a husbandman. He does no damage to our property, he lays no plots against us, and he is not a thief; he only ties his hands behind him, and sits at home; he neither sows, nor cuts a single furrow, nor harnesses an ox to the yoke, nor looks after a vine, nor in fact discharges any one of those other labours required in husbandry. Now, I say, should we not chastise such a man? And yet he has done no wrong to any one; we have no charge whatever to make against him. No, but by this very thing has he done wrong. He does wrong in that he does not contribute his own share to the common stock of good.—*St. Chrysostom.*

III. DISSUASIVES.

1 **A fruitless Christian is inexcusable and wilful.**

[12015] That so many do no more than begin well is not from want of power, since God, the righteous Governor and Judge of the world, never requires beyond the measure of what He has given. Where He hath given much, He requires much; where less, He expects less; and by consequence, if it could be supposed that there were any to whom He had given no abilities at all in the matters of their salvation, of them He would require nothing. To assert the contrary would be to renew the accusation of the slothful servant, that God was an hard Master, reaping where He had not sown. Of such an unreasonable severity as this we have no instance among men, whose humours and passions sometimes carry them to some absurd things. None of them demand interest for money which they never lent, or, when the time of harvest is come, are angry with their servants for the earth's not producing a large crop of corn, when they knew it was their own order that there should be none put in the ground.

2 **A fruitless Christian is a melancholy and sorry spectacle.**

[12016] "Woe is me, for I am as those that gather the gleanings after the vintage is done." It is sad when God has thus to speak of us. As He looks on our hearts He sees a single cluster here, and a few withered grapes on it, and another there in some remote part of our nature, so to speak, but no rich vintage, nothing to delight the eyes of God and man.—*Aitkin.*

3 **A fruitless Christian is a misnomer, a contradiction in terms.**

[12017] If a man was respectable, had some property, moved in good society, believed in the confession of faith, joined a Church, contributed to the poor in a moderate way, he was a very good Christian. "I admit he was proud; he might have been obstinate. Pretty close, too—pretty close; couldn't hold him up as very lovable, but I think he is a Christian." Christian! What is being a Christian but to be the embodiment of tender-heartedness, generosity, self-denial, self-sacrifice—a desire for the welfare of others, even at the expense of your own? What is Christianity if it is not this? The Church has been filled with mere professors of religion. I would give more for one Christian than for a whole regiment of professors to help to establish the kingdom of Christ.—*Beecher.*

IV. THE SOLE REMEDY.

[12018] It is only in fellowship with Christ that we can receive those influences and impulses which still enable us to bring forth much fruit, and thus show that we are disciples indeed. —*Spence.*

57

IDLE WORDS, USE OF.

I. THEIR DEFINITIONS AND DISTINCTIONS.

[12019] An idle word is everything in our talk which is vapid, useless, aimless.

[12020] The idle word is that which profits neither him that speaks nor him that hears.—*St. Jerome.*

[12021] The Master says: "For every idle word you shall give account." By "idle" here is meant the barren and unfruitful talk which ministers neither to recreation nor to profit. That is not an idle word which bears upon it the meaning of a joyous, affectionate, cheerful spirit, kindling what it expresses—the happiness of human hearts.

II. THEIR CLASSES AND THEIR SPECIAL GUILTINESS.

1 **The idle words of impurity.**

[12022] This is the sin of those who degrade one of the highest gifts of God to do the vilest office of His enemies. What should we think of one who smeared the walls of a city with the elements of plague? what of him who on the most dangerous headlands kindled of purpose the wrecker's fire? Yet even he would be doing the devil's work less obviously and perilously than he who into the ear of another pours the leprous distilment of his own most evil thoughts. The influence of such words is truly baleful; their effects often terribly permanent. They paint the soul's inmost chambers with unhallowed imagery; they break on its holiest memories with satanic songs. The troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt—raging waves, foaming out their own shame—such are the Scripture metaphors for these. And from all such—from all such, more and rather than from every other class of the sinful—from their words that eat as doth a canker, from the contagion of their pre-

sence, from the infection of their touch, from the contamination of their very look—from all such may God mercifully preserve the school we love!—*Archdeacon Farrar.*

2 The idle words of uncharity.

[12023] Ill-nature, gossip, spite, malice, slander, whispering, backbiting, detraction, calumny, alas! the multitude of the names—and I have not half exhausted them—proves the prolific danger of the thing. Yes, there are "the unknown voices that bellow in the shade and swell the language of falsehood and of hate;" there is "the diseased noise and scandalous murmur" of petty criticism; there is the thick scum of city loquacity, and the acrid jealousies of provincial sloth. Among you, I doubt not, there is all the petty, ignoble, seething tittle-tattle of constant and promiscuous talk. These things do not all spring from wicked bitterness, they are not all the symptoms of the empty head and the corrupted heart; sometimes they are simply the offspring of intellectual feebleness trying to seem clever by the attempt at satire; sometimes a mere effort of those who are weary of themselves and envious of others, to break what has been called "the pattering monotony of life;" sometimes a sort of disappointed egotism, and morbid self-conceit, because

> "It's always ringing in their ears,
> 'They call this man as good as me.'"

But whatever it be, it becomes a disease. It makes the mind like those looking-glasses in the temple of Smyrna which gave a false and distorted reflection even of every innocent and happy face that looked upon them. It is a great curse to the possessor—this mocking, carping, detracting, grumbling spirit; men please it not, nor women neither; it makes us, like that ancient satirist, the natural product of a corrupt and decadent civilization, who lets his tongue "rage like a fire among the noblest names, defaming and defacing,"

> "Finding low motives unto noble deeds,
> Fixing all doubt upon the darker side,"

until to him not even Helen was beautiful or Achilles brave. Kind words, and liberal estimates, and generous acknowledgment, and ready appreciation, and unselfish delight in the excellences of others—these are the truest signs of a large intellect and a noble spirit; while proneness to discover imperfection, and love of finding fault, and exultation in dwelling upon failure, and fondness for inflicting pain, are the certain marks of an unchristian temper and an ignoble heart.—*Ibid.*

3 The idle words of irreverence.

[12024] We must avoid all such pleasantries as bring anything sacred into ridicule — or, without bringing it actually into ridicule, connect with it, in the minds of others, ludicrous associations, so that they can never see the object or hear the words without the ludicrous observation being presented to them—are carefully to be eschewed. At all times our primary duty—that which is inalienably binding upon us, and from which no plea of entertainment can excuse us—is to hallow God's name.—*Dean Goulburn.*

[12025] As rank poisonous weeds, which are apt to infect the soul, are to be rooted up as soon as perceived in a garden—for if they are neglected they soon kill all the good plants that are near them, and spread over all the ground, that it becomes good for nothing—so unclean thoughts are such a poisonous weed that wherever they are indulged they eat out all other virtuous inclinations, and make a man useless as to all other good designs and business. —*J. Blair, M.A.*

58

LEVITY.

I. Its Meaning.

[12026] We do not mean by the term levity cheerfulness, merriment, a buoyancy of spirit, or an elasticity of mind; these things are not only no fault, they are a blessing, one of God's gifts; shall we not say, one of His greatest human gifts? But a disposition to make light of things, of things serious and things important; to view everything in a trifling aspect; to read and learn, to talk and enjoy, to act and live, without a due sense of the deeper meaning of all this, of its aspect (in other words) towards God, the soul, and eternity. They made light of it is a word of wide comprehension; and, when traced into some of its applications, as I desire now briefly to trace it, you will see how it describes the life and spirit of the young—would to God it were the young only!—in relation to God's gifts, and to their own present and future condition.—*Dean Vaughan.*

II. Its Prevalence.

[12027] There is always some levity, even in excellent minds; they have wings to rise and also to stray.—*Joubert.*

III. Ways in which this Sin is manifested.

[12028] People may think light of (1) advantages, (2) opportunities, (3) human life, (4) duty, (5) sin, (6) the gospel.—*Dean Vaughan.*

IV. Its Sinister and Baneful Effects.

[12029] Human levity, far more than human malignity, is the cause of all those sinister effects which we think to explain by hatred only.—*Mme. Swetchine.*

[12030] Whatever raises a levity of mind, a trifling spirit, renders the soul incapable of seeing, apprehending, and relishing the doctrines of piety.—*E. Law.*

59

RELIGIOUS TRIFLING.

I. Nature of Religious Triflers.

[12031] There are some who do not distinctly oppose religion. They regard it, in some sense, necessary to them, and therefore observe its outward forms. But they are lacking in depth and serious purpose. They are but religious triflers.

II. The Chief Traits of their Character.

1 They are forward in offers of service.

[12032] 1. They are ever ready to make promises of stricter and more enlarged service. They would not lag behind the most ardent piety, and therefore declare their willingness to increase the bonds of obligation. In the time of peril, or when they desire some special good, they are ready to make the most solemn vows. 2. They fail when the demand of duty is made. In the powerful feelings of the time the largest promises are made, but they fail to fulfil their pious resolutions. They do not pay their vows. This arises (*a*) from indolence and lack of spiritual vigour. They have not sufficient moral strength to carry on their purpose to the right issue. They have no abiding principle—hence energy fails. It sometimes arises (*b*) from avarice. They soon discover that in an unguarded moment they promised too much, and imagine that God can be put off with less. The strong feeling has cooled, and the sober fact of duty affrights them. 3. They are in a worse moral position than if the offer of service had never been made. To have omitted to vow at all was no sin. God is satisfied with a steady service, an even, constant devotion. But to over-estimate our moral strength only lands us upon new difficulties.

2 They are victims of unreality.

[12033] 1. They are deceived by words. They mistake words for things, the symbol of thought for the substance of it. Words are easily uttered, but when they are unreal, they lead the soul into a snare. How many are the victims of mere phrases! 2. They are morally corrupted by words. The mouth brings sin upon the flesh. The tongue has corrupted the whole man. Language reacts upon thought and feeling, and the habit of uttering hollow words only deepens the vain shadow in which such are walking. 3. They are altogether the slaves of imagination. Their words are but the flimsy and vanishing elements of a dream. Men of dreamy minds are unfit for the sober and often prosaical duties of life.

3 They are cunning to invent excuses.

[12034] When the hour arrives for performing the vow, they are ready with plausible excuses. 1. The plea of infirmity. They urge that the vow was, after all, a mistake. It was simply "an error." The service was never really intended, but thoughtlessly promised in some sudden rush of feeling. Thus they excuse their forwardness and disown the obligation. 2. They are bold enough to urge their plea before the representatives of God. They say it before "the angel." They enter the place of the holy, and before God's appointed witnesses dare to resent the plea of infirmity. They try to pass off a culpable rashness for a mere error.

III. The Dangers in which Religious Triflers stand.

1 They are exposed to the Divine judgment.

[12035] 1. They provoke the anger of God. He is the God of truth, and can have no pleasure in those whose words are unreal, and whose whole life is a delusion. The religious trifler misuses the gift of speech, employing it in sophistry and evasion. Hence he provokes eternal justice. God is angry at his voice. 2. Their conduct brings its own punishment. Such conduct must issue in the complete loss of their work. God will destroy Offended justice will reject their impertinent offers of service, and punishment fall upon those deceivers who profane holy things to serve the base uses of hypocrisy. 3. Their punishment can only be averted by the fear of God. This is the very soul of reverence. The fools—the solemn triflers in the sanctuary of God—must learn this fear, which is "the beginning of wisdom." They must return to seriousness, truth, and reality. They must learn to respect the morality of words—the sacred proprieties of speech. All falsehood and unreality must be destroyed before life can be placed upon a permanent and safe foundation.—*The Study.*

60

UNFAITHFULNESS.

I. The Possibly Ruinous Consequences of a Single Act of Unfaithfulness.

[12036] The least unfaithfulness may bring a curse upon us, as the foot of the chamois on the snowy mountains, or the breath of a traveller who sings or shouts on his snowy road, may cause an avalanche which shall entomb the village now full of life and gaiety at the mountain's base.—*Rev. Samuel Martin.*

II. The Special Guilt of Ministerial Unfaithfulness.

[12037] Weary and happy, I retired to rest, soon fell asleep, and dreamed a horrid dream. I thought I died. Instead of finding myself in heaven, resistlessly sinking, I entered a gloomy vault, where countenances stamped with hopeless despair surrounded me. "Where am I?" "In hell," a hollow voice replied. "And are these sad souls to be my everlasting companions?" "Nay, nay," was answered in the same sepulchral tone, "lower down, lower down than this for unfaithful ministers!" It is no fiction, that of all hells a fallen minister's would prove most terrible. That dream enshrines within its grim symbology a tremendous truth.—*S. Coley.*

III. Causes of Unfaithfulness in the Pulpit.

1 The fear of giving offence.

[12038] Can there be a more bitterly bad account of the preaching of any minister than that an unconverted man should like to hear it? Could worse be said of any preaching than that an unconverted man finds it pleasing and soothing? Is it not so, if it be so at all, because that preaching is "a comfort to Sodom"? No sermon is good unless it makes a godless man uncomfortable and ill at ease: it is only thus that it will ever stir him to earnest turning to Christ. O brethren, what an awful thing to think of, that perhaps in the place of woe there may a soul be found that shall be able to say, "I went every Sunday to my parish church; I listened to the preaching of the parish minister; his sermons were always pleasing and soothing to listen to; they never made me uncomfortable; they never sent me home dissatisfied with myself. Sunday by Sunday I heard them—I heard them and I am here!" Think of the unfaithful minister—think of the cowardlyminister that durst not preach the truth for fear of giving offence—think of him entering the other world, and greeted there by such a cry as that! Oh, shall the preacher of the gospel dare to preach smooth things, with such a possibility as that before him! Shall the fear of man drive him to dare the curse of God! Shall he, bidden as he is to "speak comfortably to Jerusalem," speak comfort to Sodom too!

2 Mere speculative religion.

[12039] The speculative Christian is he who makes religion only a science, and studies it as a piece of learning, and part of that general knowledge in which he affects the reputation of being a master; he hath no design to practise it, but he is loth to be ignorant of it, because the knowledge of it is a good ornament of conversation, and will serve for discourse and entertainment among those who are disposed to be grave and serious; and because he does not intend to practise it, he passeth over those things which are plain and easy to be understood, and applies himself chiefly to the consideration of those things which are more abstruse, and will afford matter of controversy and subtle dispute, as the doctrine of the Trinity, Predestination, Free-will, and the like. Of this temper seem many of the schoolmen of old to have been, who made it their great study and business to puzzle religion, and to make everything in it intricate, by starting infinite questions and difficulties about the plainest truths; and of the same rank usually are the heads and leaders of parties and factions in religion, who by needless controversies, and endless disputes about something or other, commonly of no great moment in religion, hinder themselves and others from minding the practice of the great and substantial duties of a good life.—*Abp. Tillotson.*

61

UNPROFITABLENESS.

I. Its Nature.

[12040] Unfruitfulness consists in two things: a neglect of duty, or a lifeless and unprofitable performance of it. The former I will call idleness; the latter lukewarmness, coldness, formality; and each of them is encumbered with mistakes and errors, which arise not only from self-love and partiality, but also from shallowness of judgment, joined with tenderness of conscience.—*Dr. Richard Lucas.*

II. Its Cause.

[12041] The unfruitfulness and unprofitableness of many is not to be wondered at when you see them apparently happier amid the pleasures of the world than in fellowship with their Lord.—*Spence.*

III. Its Guilt.

[12042] The fig-tree was withered, not for bearing bad fruit, but for yielding no fruit. The foolish virgins were excluded, not for casting away the lamps, but for not using them. The unprofitable servant was cast into the outer darkness, not for wasting the talent entrusted to him, but for not employing it. The worldling whom our Lord denominates a *fool* is not charged with any positive sins, . . . but he had laid up treasures "only for himself," and was not rich towards God.—*Harris.*

[12043] We may lose heaven by neutrality as well as by hostility, by wanting oil as well as by drinking poison. An unprofitable servant shall as much be punished as a prodigal son. Undone duty will undo our souls. The last words of the industrious Archbishop Usher were, "Lord, in special, forgive me my sins of omission."

[12044] It is not sufficient for us to say we

lead harmless lives; nay, every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and not those only that bring forth evil fruit. Neither shall Christ accuse the wicked at the last day for taking the meat out of His mouth, or plucking His apparel off His back; but for not putting meat into His mouth and clothes upon His back.—*D. Dyke*, 1618.

[12045] Sins of commission are usual punishments for sins of omission. He that leaves a duty may fear to be left to commit a crime.—*Gurnal.*

[12046] Barrenness or unfruitfulness may in general best be underſtood by comparing it with a state of wickedness; from which, as it is usually distinguished in the notion of the vulgar, so does it really differ in many accounts. The one has in it an air of defiance; the other an unconcernment for religion: the one forgets God; the other contemns Him: the one has no relish or savour of that which is good; the other finds too much gust and pleasure in that which is evil: the one makes us, by degrees, enemies; the other strangers to God. In short, there is little doubt to be made but that the omission of a duty and the commission of a crime, lukewarmness in that which is good, and eagerness and confidence in that which is evil, may, and generally do, differ very widely in the degrees of guilt: from hence it is (the sinner being always a partial and indulgent judge of himself) that it is not unusual for many who seem to have some abhorrence of wickedness, to be far enough from apprehending much evil or much danger in unfruitfulness. This is a fatal error; it frustrates the great design of religion, and robs it of its finest honour—good works. For what can religion effect by that man who retains nothing of it but the bare form and profession, and dares promise himself not only impunity, but a heaven, in a useless and unprofitable life? —*Richard Lucas.*

62

LOVE OF POMPS AND VANITIES.

I. The Obscuring Power of this Love.

[12047] Objects close to the eye shut out much larger objects on the horizon; and splendours born only of the earth eclipse the stars. So a man sometimes covers up the entire disc of eternity with a sovereign, and quenches transcendant glories with a little shining dust.

II. Its Folly.

1 Exemplified in the loss of the abiding wealth of moral qualities for the gain of a brief tenure of earthly possession.

[12048] If we do not let these earthly things go for virtue's sake, at death at length we must leave them, and often to whom we know not, as says Ecclesiastes. What gain is it to acquire what we cannot carry away with us? Far different are prudence, justice, temperance, fortitude, understanding, charity, love of the poor, faith towards Christ, gentleness, hospitality. Obtain we these, and we shall find them there before us, making ready a dwelling for us in the country of the meek.—*St. Antony.*

2 Exemplified in the purchase of a moment of joy by an age of sorrow.

[12049] The pomp of the world and the favour of the people are but smoke vanishing, which, if they commonly please, commonly bring repentance; and for a moment of joy they bring an age of sorrow.—*St. Andrus.*

III. Duty of Renouncing "the Pomps and Vanities of this Wicked World."

1 Meaning of the phrase.

[12050] The pomps and vanity of the world are all things by which the world produces this effect, viz. (1) Wealth (*a*) with all its comforts, luxuries, self-gratification, self-worship; (*b*) in youth, its freedom from care, its unthankfulness, its selfishness, disregard of the poor. (2) Pleasure, (*a*) *i.e.*, amusement mental and bodily, excitement of society; (*b*) in youth, the postponement of daily duties, lessons, &c., to the temptations of light reading, games, &c. (3) Honour, (*a*) whether of fame, rank, or power, and the flatteries attending each; (*b*) in youth, the love of popularity, blind submission to public opinion, adoption of prevalent maxims, principles, &c.—*Dean Vaughan.*

2 Import of the duty.

[12051] To renounce the pomps and vanities of the wicked world is (1) to feel the *danger* of becoming worldly—*i.e.*, of forgetting God in the things of this life; (2) to resolve by God's grace (*a*) to give up once for all in principle, and from time to time in detail, any amusement or pleasure which we find unavoidably to have this effect; and (*b*) to watch against this effect in things which it is not in our power to give up, as, *e.g.*, our worldly business and circumstances in life: in short, to *use* this world as not abusing it (1 Cor. vii. 31). Details, however, must be left to *conscience*: a thing may be bad for one, and not for another; or *excess* alone may be injurious in many things, and we must never judge others for doing what we couid not safely do (Rom. xiv. 1–13).—*Ibid.*

63

VAIN THOUGHTS.

I. Their Distinctions.

[12052] With all their varieties, and compass, and mischief, they stand as but one class

of the evil thoughts by which the human mind is infested, that of the trifling, empty, impertinent, volatile, useless, as distinguishable from vicious or polluted thoughts, malignant thoughts, and thoughts directly impious.—*John Foster.*

II. Their Characteristics.

[12053] 1. Those thoughts are "vain" from which we do not, and cannot, reap any good; supposing them not of the directly noxious kind.

2. Those thoughts are regarded of the "vain" character which cannot associate in any agreement with useful and valuable ones.

3. Those are "vain thoughts" which it is found absolutely necessary to drive and keep out in order to attend to any serious matter to good purpose; and, unhappily, often as difficult as it is necessary.

4. An obvious description of vain thoughts is, thoughts dwelling largely and habitually on trifling things.

5. "Vain" are the thoughts that are habitually dwelling on trifling subjects, but still more so, if possible, those that trifle with important ones.

6. Another characteristic of vanity in the thoughts is their not remaining with any continuance on a subject; their fickleness.

7. There are vanities of thought of a less fickle character. As when the mind has some specially favourite trifle; some cherished, idolized toy; some enchanting particle of this world's dust; some purpose to be effected has grown interesting only by the habit of thinking of it.

8. Partly like this is that vanity of which many have to accuse their thoughts, in relation to things perhaps not exactly of the frivolous class, and that justly claim a measure of thought; namely, the tendency to return to them continually, when it is sensibly evident that the thinking more of them can be of no advantage.

9. This will often be accompanied by another mode of vain thought, that of allowing the mind to dwell on fancies of how things might be, or might have been; when the plain reality of how they are and must be, is before us.

10. Finally a wide and aggravated charge of vain thought falls upon men's notions and schemings of worldly felicity.—*Ibid.*

III. The Question of their Guiltiness.

[12054] The thoughts of every child of God are ordinarily working for the maintenance and furthering of God's glory and good causes; for procuring true good to their brethren, especially in spiritual things; for increasing grace in themselves, and their store of comfort against the day of trial. And if so be (which sometimes befalls the best) they be crossed by sinful motions in themselves, or suggestions of Satan; yet by their surprising and suppressing them at the very first rising and assault, and by present repentance, they are undoubtedly ever pardoned unto them in Christ Jesus.

[12055] Some men tell us that every natural inclination to a forbidden object is a sin; which they that believe, finding them to be natural, do also confess that such sins are unavoidable. But if these natural and first motions be sins, then a man sins whether he resists them or resists them not—whether he prevails or prevails not; and there is no other difference but this—he that fights not against, but always yields to, his desires, sins greatest; and he that never yields, but fights always, sins oftenest. But then, by this reckoning, it will indeed be impossible to avoid millions of sins; because the very doing of our duty supposes a sin. If God should impute such first desires to us as sins, we were all very miserable; but if He does not impute them, let us trouble ourselves no further about them, but to take care that they never prevail on us.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

[12056] There's a great deal of *contemplative* wickedness which is exercised and acted in the world.

[12057] A man may commit the same sin a thousand times by renewing the pleasures of it in his thoughts. Though the act be past, yet as often as the mind runs over the passages and circumstances of the same sin, with the same delight, so often the soul is polluted with a new stain and laden with more guiltiness.

[12058] An idle sinful thought begins to draw, as it were, the heart aside from the presence and consideration of God Almighty, to a sight and survey of the pleasures of sin. Secondly, it having, as it were, the heart by itself, puts on a bait, allures and entices, holding a conference and parley with the will about the sweetness of pleasures, riches, honours, glory, and such like. Thirdly, the will accepts of the motion, consents, plots, and forecasts for the accomplishment, the affections add heat and strength, the heart travails with iniquity; and so at length, by the help of opportunity, sin is brought forth.

[12059] The first beginning and hatching of any sin is first in the thoughts of the heart: and if kings will have their servants in their accounts answer even for pence, why may not God call us to a reckoning even for our smallest debts? And if men punish words and deeds, because they see and know them, why then should not God punish our thoughts, which He knows far better than any man can do our outward actions? We must therefore make conscience of the idle rovings of our brains; our very thoughts and imaginations must stoop and do homage to God, who hath required of us to be loved with all our thoughts, and biddeth us tremble even at the very first rising of

evil thoughts and motions in our hearts, and sin not. But, alas! many do invert the sentence, and in this kind very boldly sin and tremble not. —*Dyke*, 1642.

IV. Their Perniciousness.

1 They waste the activity of the thinking power.

[12060] We have need of a profitable use of all this, and are kept poor by the waste; we cannot afford it. The sun may waste an immense proportion of his beams, the clouds of their showers, but these can be spared; there is an infinite opulence still for all the indispensable purposes of nature. It is not so with our thinking faculty. The most saving use of our thinking power will but imperfectly suffice for the knowledge, sound judgment, and wisdom which are so very necessary for us. It is wretched, then, that this precious thing, the activity of our thinking spirit, should run to utter waste. It is as if the fine element by means of which your city is now lighted should be suffered to expire into the air without being kindled into light.—*John Foster.*

[12061] If the thoughts are left unrestrained to commit folly, they will commit an immensity of it. In this kind of activity, the thinking power is never tired nor exhausted. Think of the rapidity of the train! how sure it is that another, and still another, will instantly come! Think of the endless evolutions, the never-ceasing sport, the confused multiplicity! Never stagnant pool was more prolific of flies, nor the swarm about it more wild and worthless! But what a wretched running to waste of the thinking principle! "How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?"—*Ibid.*

2 They put us practically out of the relation we are placed in to the highest objects and interests.

[12062] We are placed in relation to God—Christ—a future world—to an infinite interest. Now how is this relation to be recognized, to be practically realized in our minds? How can it be but by thought of an appropriate kind? The sensible connection of the mind with those great objects, its contact with them, must be by means of there being in it ideas of those objects, ideas in a degree corresponding to their greatness. Certainly, not ideas alone, when we are speaking of a saving and happy connection with Divine objects, but, at all events, ideas. Now how are these important and solemn ideas to have any occupancy and hold of the mind when it is filled and dissipated with all the vanities of thought? They cannot abide on the mind, nor come to it in such a state. It is as when, in some regions, a swarm of locusts fills the air, so as to exclude the sun, at once intercepting the light of heaven, and devouring what it should shine on. Thus by ill-regulated thought we are defrauded of what is the supreme value of thought. We amuse ourselves with the flying chaff, careless of the precious grain—*Ibid.*

3 They in no way aid us in the important matters of practical duty.

[12063] What will ten thousand of these trifling volatile thoughts come to, for explaining any subject, disentangling any perplexity, rectifying any false notion, enforcing any argument, maintaining any truth? It is in vain that the man glances in recollection and research through all the idle crowd of his ideas for anything to avail him. It were like bringing straws and leaves and feathers to meet an account where silver and gold were required. Such a person feels an inability to concentrate his thoughts to a purpose of social wisdom, when there is a particular occasion to do so, and an extreme repugnance to make the attempt. In consequence the communications of social life will contribute little to improvement; they will be dissipated among trifling topics; they will be shallow and unprofitable on important ones; they will tend to run quite into levity and folly.—*Ibid.*

V. Their Correctives.

1 Viewed generally.

[12064] Acquire some measure of such a well-ordered habit of thought as directed to all one's concerns. In other words, that, as a Christian, he should be such, in the discipline of his thinking, as some men are in capacity of worldly schemers, or scholars, or philosophers.—*Ibid.*

[12065] There is no dexterous desire to obviate an evil arising from an habitual propensity of the mind, especially when it is added that an habitual propensity will have been in some degree habitually indulged. There is no mental wand of enchantment at the waving of which the infesting swarm shall suddenly die, and the grievance cease. They will but make sport of any single act or signal for scaring them away that is not part of a regular, determined, systematic hostility. But as parts and expedients in such a regular persevering discipline, we might suggest a few things serviceable to the purpose.—*Ibid.*

2 Viewed particularly.

[12066] 1. Have certain specified subjects, of serious interest, to turn to when thought is beginning to be dissipated into these vanities; certain subjects might be selected and fixed expressly for this purpose. This might be something nearer, as it were, to serve to the purpose than the merely being sensible that there are many important subjects to which I might turn my attention. There is a grand assemblage to select from. And, by the way, what a reflection here on the folly and guilt of an indulged vanity of thought! General important truth offers many: choose any one. The memory of matters of fact. Suppose the recollection of a perilous situation and providential interposition.

Or the remembrance of a dying scene. There is possibly in the room the picture of a dead friend. Conscience offers subjects of thought; for example, the record of what a man judges to have been his greatest sin! If turning his mind to meet this dark aspect will not check and suspend the vain career, should he not be alarmed at such a power as the vanity has over his mind? Should not even this very alarm be strong enough to produce the desired effect?—*Ibid.*

[12067] 2. Another very simple and obvious expedient would be, for the person to make a sudden charge of guilt on his mind, when the vain thoughts are prevailing; that is, the guilt of being so surrendered to them. And let that charge be accompanied and enforced by the thought "God sees!" just as one has seen sometimes the levity of talk interrupted by an unexpected flash of lightning and clap of thunder. If a man has not left him enough of conscience and right will to do so simple a thing as this, what a pernicious effect he may perceive that his vanity of thought has had! that it has subdued him, reconciled him to its indulgence! If to do this is of no avail, what should he think then?—*Ibid.*

[12068] 3. Again, when it is in solitude that a man feels this plague infesting his mind (and it is then that he is especially liable to it), it were well to have recourse to a direct act of devotion.—*Ibid.*

[12069] 4. Again, the course of vain thoughts might sometimes be interrupted and stopped by the question, brought to strike, as it were, suddenly on the mind, What is, just now, my most pressing duty? "Why it is"—judgment and conscience can tell in one word—what it is. But here, now, I am neglecting it, and for the sake of what?—*Ibid.*

[12070] 5. Sometimes a good temporary recourse would be to go directly to some practical occupation, some useful manual occupation, the adjustment of some point in a matter of business, or, if leisure permits, a short visit to some house of mourning.—*Ibid.*

[12071] 6. Again, as a general and habitual expedient of correction, it will be of the very highest use and importance, to exercise and constrain our thinking to go along with the thoughts of those who have thought the best. Of course this means attentively reading the most valuable books; reading so as to take hold of the meaning, connection, and design. How forcible the contrary will be felt to be, and the reproach, to the idle nothings of thought! We shall be made to perceive to what admirable purpose the thinking faculty can be worked, and made to perceive what rubbish and dust and nuisance is the sort of thinking into which an ungoverned idle spirit will trifle and rove! (Here animadvert on the prevailing light reading of the times.) Speaking of such vigorous exercise on a book, we may ask, How much without it will you gain from the Bible?—*Ibid.*

[12072] 7. We are naturally led to another suggestion for the reform in question, namely, the importance of thinking to a certain purpose, towards a proposed end. It is a chief characteristic of vain thoughts that they are not in pursuit and progress toward any assigned object; they aim at nothing and come to nothing. A good question to arrest them will be, "What does all this tend to?"—*Ibid.*

[12073] 8. It will tend to check and shame these vanities, to reflect seriously and pointedly, in the very midst of them, how utterly worthless they are for those desirable purposes; how many things we have to do that these will not enable us, but the direct contrary. And then the mortifying reflection, which cannot be too often repeated and aggravated, "What they have done for us!" There have been millions of them in my mind—and what result? We have reiterated the words "atoms" and "dust" as types of their worthlessness; but atoms and dust will in length of time form a fruitful soil; lava has been so covered. Worse then is the case with these mental vanities. The infinity of them never deposits a material of fertility, and they impoverish and blast the ground besides.—*Ibid.*

[12074] 9. Reflect also what would have been the present result of so many good and pertinent thoughts, instead of so many "vain thoughts." Nay, if a tenth, a fiftieth part of the number; if there had been but comparatively a few grains of gold deposited by the stream that has carried so many particles of mud into the ocean! "Good and pertinent thoughts," we said; we might try sometimes and verify the difference between such and the vain ones. For we may interrupt those vain ones to consider what would be the best thoughts on the very same subject. What would have been, on this very matter, the ideas of this or the other wise and well-exercised spirit? Sometimes we may perhaps recollect what they actually have been. It were a good expedient to repeat some of the ideas they have so expressed, and then put in words a certain portion of our vain thoughts! But even without such a comparison, think how a portion of such thoughts would sound put in words and spoken aloud! If one hour's train of them had been all spoken aloud, just in the form and order in which they were suffered to run! And if a small company were each to do this, what a community of wisdom it would make!—*Ibid.*

[12075] 10. A great deal may depend on the company a man keeps. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise" (Prov. xiii. 20). Society can easily be found in which every vanity of the soul may be indulged and confirmed; and

the choosing of it by preference is practically saying that all this concern of correction and improvement may go to the winds.—*Ibid.*

64

VANITY, INCLUDING VAINGLORY.

I. The Difficulty of an Effectual Examination of the Sin of Vanity.

[12076] How shall we manage to pursue our examination effectually? where find the scales nice enough to weigh a bubble, or get a needle fine enough to pick up a vapour, that we may turn it about for our inspection on all sides, so as to discern exactly its make and colours? We can all see vanity at a distance with a striking plainness; it is like the clouds gathered in a body, whose tinselled edges glitter in the western sun; but who can see the vapours drawn up by his meridian beams to form those clouds, though standing in the middle of the stream that flows copiously around him? So that other vapour, which surrounds us always like an atmosphere wherever we go, eludes our sight by its nearness. It lies too close to the eye to be discerned, too flat upon the skin to be taken hold of; it insinuates among our pores, mingles among our vital juices, trips along the tongue, dances upon the eyes, trepidates through the nerves, wantons in the gestures, lurks among the sentiments, taints the imagination, and runs throughout the whole constitution; insomuch that it has been generally thought innate, as an essential part of the human composition.

II. Its Definition.

[12077] Ambition of all kinds, from that of the statesman down to the fiddler, and pride are distinguishable from vanity: the first being a greediness of acquiring superiority, the second a fond contemplation of that we have, and the last a like fond humour of showing it. But since unnecessary distinctions tend only to burden the mind, for practical purposes we may comprehend all three under the one term vanity, as they all spring from one common principle, the love of excelling others.

III. Its Predominance.

[12078] Vanity is one of the most powerful springs of human action, and is usually the besetting sin of every one.

[12079] Though nature will not own the monstrous birth, it must be acknowledged one of the earliest of our acquisitions, which being bred in the bone will never go out of the flesh: for we suck it in with our milk, imbibe it from our parents, catch it from our playfellows, are enticed into it by our self-love, encouraged to it by the world, and confirmed in it by the general practice: so that education, sympathy, and example all combining to rivet it in us, it is no wonder it grows into an inveterate habit, giving birth to most of our latent motives, operating upon us imperceptibly, and so perpetually entering the scale of judgment, as scarce to be distinguished from the other weights. For by its pervading quality infusing itself into them all, it can skulk under a thousand disguises, and, Proteus-like, assume a thousand various forms, taking away the similitude of whatever covering it lies under. One never knows where to have it sure: if you mortify it in one shape, it gathers new life in another; if you weed it effectually out of one spot, it instantly sprouts up in the opposite quarter behind you: so that with all the pains you can take, your work is never ended, nor your vigilance allowed a moment's respite.

[12080] Vanity is given to children with their playthings, and taught them with their instructions: they are made to show about their little toys, to angle for everybody's admiration at their prettiness, and bid to be mannerly by way of setting themselves above the dirty beggar boys in the street. In youth the fancy runs upon peculiar advantages possessed above others, whether bodily strength, sagacity in outwitting, handsomeness of person, or finery of dress, luxuriates in affectation of all trifling kinds, and renders the school they were bred up in, the way of life they have been accustomed to, or little accomplishment they chance to have succeeded in, infinitely preferable to everything else in the world besides. In manhood there are riches, or family, or favour of the great, or magnificence in buildings or equipage, and all the pride of life, administering fuel to vanity: the desire or less in every soil universally, and appearing very early without any cultivation, they are the product of custom, our second nature. For I have endeavoured to show in the chapters of my first volume upon the four classes of motives, how use grows from pleasure, and honour from use by translation; for being first found satisfactory as a means conducive to their respective end, in process of time the end drops out of thought, and then satisfaction becomes completely translated to the means, resting upon it as an end without intervention of any other. Hence it appears that honour, however propagated among individuals by sympathy, derives its origin and receives its value immediately from use, but remotely from pleasure.

This passion operates where one would least expect it, sets up the mechanic for a judge over judges, qualifies the common councilman to dictate measures of state, serves for inspiration to the enthusiast, supports the methodist under his incessant labours, and reigns in triumph over the free-thinker. The wily sorceress contrives means to nestle in the bosom of religion, works hollow passages under the solid ground

of philosophy, and finds a crevice to slip through into treatises on humility. Perhaps a tincture may have infused itself unperceived into this very page, under the specious appearance of relieving the reader that he may return with fresh spirits to drier disquisitions; or the glittering sand of ornament been strewed, not so much to set off the subject as by a secret impulse prompting to set off the operator.

[12081] Every one at bottom of his heart cherishes vanity; even the toad thinks himself good-looking; "rather tawny, perhaps, but look at his eye."—*J. Wilson.*

[12082] There is no limit to the vanity of this world, each spoke in the wheel thinks the whole strength of the wheel depends on it.—*H. W. Shaw.*

[12083] Vanity is so anchored in the heart of man that a soldier, sutler, cook, street porter, vapour and wish to have their admirers; and philosophers even wish the same; and those who write against it wish to have the glory of having written well; and those who read it wish to have the glory of having read well; and I who write this have perhaps this desire; and perhaps those who will read this.—*Pascal.*

IV. Its Tenacity and Vitality.

[12084] It is the reproach of human nature, it breeds, like vermin, in the corruptions and infirmities of our constitutions, it is an epidemical disease spreading like the pestilence; for the trifling world around us so fills the air with infection, as the London smoke does with blacks, that we can neither keep ourselves nor our furniture tolerably clean without continual washings and scrubbings. It is such a dissembler there is no getting rid of it entirely; when you go to hunt it down most eagerly it will follow close at your elbow, mingling among your train, like an accomplice of a pickpocket, who joins in with the crowd as one of the pursuers. For a man may be vain of his exemption from the vanities he sees in another, or more vain of his having no vanity at all himself; when once he begins to say in his own mind, nobody has less vanity than I, he has more than he knows of, for all advantageous comparison foments it. One would think the contemplation of our own follies and fond imaginations should be the surest recipe to mortify it: but sometimes the contrary falls out by our growing vain in the comparison of our former with our present selves. We may take pleasure in abusing our nature to exaggerate our corrections of it, in example of the greatest sages of antiquity, who have performed wonders that way: puffed up with the conceit of how much we should cheat Zopyrus the physiognomist, and how our friends who know us would laugh as heartily at him as Alcibiades did if he were here to try his skill upon our features.

Therefore it is the emptiest of all vanities to fancy ourselves utterly void of it; this lulls us into a security that leaves open the door for many others to intrude; it were better to possess our minds with the impossibility of escaping perfectly, and then we shall stand more upon our guard against treachery within, which would let in new enemies upon us.

[12085] The most violent passions have their intermission; vanity alone gives us no respite. —*Rochefoucauld.*

V. Its Irrepressiveness.

[12086] There is no restraining men's tongues or pens when charged with a little vanity.—*Washington.*

VI. Its Subterfuges.

[12087] O vanity! how little is thy force acknowledged or thy operations discerned! How wantonly dost thou deceive mankind under different disguises! Sometimes thou dost wear the face of pity, sometimes of generosity; nay, thou hast the assurance to put on those glorious ornaments which belong only to heroic virtue. —*Fielding.*

[12088] It was prettily devised of Æsop, the fly set upon the axletree of the chariot-wheel, and said, "What a dust do I raise!" So are there some vain persons that, whatsoever goeth alone, or moveth upon greater means, if they have never so little hand in it, think it is they who carry it. . . . They who write books on the contempt of glory inscribe their own name on the titles. . . . Vainglorious men are the scorn of wise men, the admiration of fools, the idols of parasites, and the slaves of their own vaunts. —*Bacon.*

[12089] It is recorded of an architect of the name of Cnidius that, having built a watch-tower for the king of Egypt, to warn mariners from certain dangerous rocks, he caused his own name to be engraved on a certain stone in the wall, and then having covered it with plaster he inscribed on the outside, in golden letters, the name of the king of Egypt, as though the thing were done for his glory. He was cunning enough to know that the waves would, ere long, wash away the coat of plastering, and that then his own name would appear, and his memory be handed down to successive generations. How many are there who, while affecting to seek only the glory of God and His Church, are really seeking whatever is calculated to gratify self-love. Could the outer coat as it were of their pretences be removed, we should see them as they really are, desirous not of God's glory, but of their own.—*Illustrations of Truth.*

VII. Its Native Home.

[12090] Vanity is the fruit of ignorance; it thrives most in subterranean places, never reached by the air of heaven and the light of the sun.—*J. W. Ross.*

VIII. Its Incidental Causes.

[12091] Charms which, like flowers, lie on the surface and always glitter, easily produce vanity; hence women, wits, players, soldiers, are vain, owing to their presence, figure, and dress; on the contrary, other excellences which lie down like gold, and are discovered with difficulty—such as strength, profoundness of intellect, virtue, and morality—leave their possessors modest and reserved.—*Richter.*

IX. Its Boundaries.

[12092] Without incurring the imputation of this weakness, a man may desire the approbation and love of friends whom he esteems virtuous and wise. It is inseparable from love to wish to be beloved by its object, and a tender conscience is naturally pleased with the approbation of the wise and good. Both of these principles seem to be approved by Solomon when he says, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold." "A good name is better than precious ointment." But to wish for the "loving favour" of those we love, and a "good name" among the virtuous and wise, is quite a different thing from a general thirst for distinction—a sickly craving for admiration and applause.

Again, there is a virtuous sentiment which may perhaps be called a sense of honour; but it is very different from that sense of honour which dwells in souls inflated with pride. It is that exquisite love of purity which a delicate and conscientious mind feels when it shrinks with horror from the touch of pollution. There is no pride or thirst for distinction in this emotion. That sense of honour which duellists cherish is infinitely different from that sense of honour which angels feel. One is rank pride, the other is the dread of moral pollution.

Again, a man, without the desire of vainglory, may, in the conscientious pursuit of duty, merit and obtain military distinction, provided he believes in the lawfulness of war; he may ascend through all the grades of political preferment: for the sake of decency he may, in some measure, adapt his style of living to his station in society, conscientiously believing that by this means his usefulness will be promoted. For the same reason, if he is a public speaker, he may give his style a form that will excite the least possible disgust, and make the strongest impression of truth. But in all these things it is the motive by which the man is to be tried. One man seeks these distinctions from pride, another from holy love; one from supreme regard to himself, another from supreme regard to God; one from a desire of vainglory, another from respect to the authority and glory of his heavenly Father. Now, what I would impress upon your minds is, that to seek or affect any of these distinctions from pride, or a supreme regard to self, or for the sake of the mere pleasure of being exalted in the eyes of men, or for any other purpose than to be more useful, is offensive to God.—*E. D. Griffin.*

X. Its Mischievous Effects.

[12093] Nothing operates more powerfully in perverting the judgment, that guiding faculty by whose ministry alone we may render all the others serviceable. The vain man can never think justly of things nor equitably of persons, where his vanity has any or the least concern, which it seldom fails to have in most cases occurring for his decision. It throws a bar against improvement by the persuasion of a sufficiency already attained; it shuts his ear against information and his heart against conviction, lest he should appear ever to have been wanting in knowledge, or liable to mistake. It prevents all self-examination, for fear he should find something that might wound his vanity: it renders him indocible of that most useful science of ignorance; for he knows of none within him to be the object of such science. It falsifies the weights and measures of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, laudable and blameable, making him judge of them according to what he has or does, or believes himself exaggerating his own and depreciating whatever belongs to another. It damps his industry by the disdain of little acquisitions as unworthy his notice, whereas it has been often observed that a shopkeeper will never thrive who despises small profits: in like manner we feeble, short-sighted mortals, who at best are but pedlars in the trade of virtue, shall make no great progress at all if we neglect opportunities of gaining a little ground at a time. But the conceited will stoop to nothing that is not grand, noble, extraordinary: he must preside at the helm, or convert heathen nations, or draw multitudes at his heels, or knock down all opposers with demonstration; and if by scorning to do anything common he undertakes nothing feasible, he solaces himself with reflecting what mighty wonders he should have performed if such or such perverse incidents had not fallen in the way.

XI. Its Remedies.

[12094] When men will not be reasoned out of a vanity, they must be ridiculed out of it.—*L'Estrange.*

[12095] When you are disposed to be vain of your mental acquirements, look up to those who are more accomplished than yourself, that you may be fired with emulation; but when you feel dissatisfied with your circumstances, look down on those beneath you, that you may learn contentment.—*J. Moore.*

XII. Its Accidental Connection with Certain Virtues.

[12096] A vain man can never be altogether rude; desirous as he is of pleasing, he fashions his manners after those of others.—*Goethe.*

[12097] Vanity is closely allied to virtue, and to love and fame of laudable actions for their own sake, that these passions are more capable of mixture than any other kinds of affection; it is almost impossible—*i.e.*, without Christian principles—to have the latter without some degree of the former.—*Hume.*

[12098] Vanity bids all her sons be brave, and all her daughters chaste and courteous; but why do we need her instructions? Ask the comedian who is taught a part which he does not feel.—*Sterne.*

XIII. Definition of the Principle of Vainglory.

[12099] A desire to excel in anything for the sake of being esteemed equal or superior to another; or, in other words, for the sake of having another regarded as inferior or no more than equal to ourselves; or it is the love of human admiration and applause for the sake of the personal glory which it brings.—*E. D. Griffin.*

[12100] To "glory" means to value one's self; to feel self-complacency because of some real or fancied superiority. One walks the streets with such an air that you would say he supposes that God had fashioned a masterpiece when He fashioned him. Yet no; it is not even his body that he so much glories in as in the things which he has stuck on it. Others glory in their strength, their wealth, their family; all such glorying is vain.—*Beecher.*

XIV. The Description of the Vainglorious Religionist.

[12101] To be seen of men! Christ ringeth the changes on that—exposing the vainglory that lay at the root of the religion of the Pharisees. Loud, ostentatious, and unprofitable, it was like the brawling, foaming, frothy torrent, which, with a rock for its bed and barrenness for its banks, makes itself seen and heard.—*Guthrie.*

XV. The First Necessity of the Vain Man.

[12102] On self-applause the vain man lives, and on it depends, for he has nothing in himself. For this he makes a show of all his advantages, and when they are not enough, a false show of such as are not his, and is unhappy while the attention of his company is diverted, even for a moment, to another object.—*Homilist.*

XVI. The Difference between the Desires of Excellence and of Excellency.

[12103] How very frequently the latter leads astray from the former, fixing the attention upon show and appearance rather than upon solid substance and intrinsic value! It chooses to move alone in a narrow sphere, where nothing noble or important can be achieved, rather than share jointly with others in the movement of mighty engines by which much good might be effected. Where did the desire of excelling ever glow more intensely than in Cæsar, whose favourite saying we are told was this, That he had rather be the first man in a paltry village, than the second in Rome. Did not Alexander, another madman, in the same species of frenzy, chide his tutor Aristotle for publishing to the world those discoveries in philosophy he would have had reserved for himself alone? But if he esteemed learning an excellence, it would have been a more excellent deed to have spread it with his conquests. It must be allowed that none ever surpassed the surpassers of mankind in the passion for comparative glory, unless it were the devil, into whose mouth Milton has with great propriety put the like thought with Cæsar's, "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven;" and we are told the same vainglorious being traverses the world with indefatigable zeal to destroy excellence wherever he can find it.

XVII. The Wounds of Vanity.

[12104] Alas for human nature, that the wounds of vanity should smart and bleed so much longer than the wounds of affection.—*Macaulay.*

XVIII. Contrast between Heathen and Christian Teaching respecting the Principle of Vainglory.

[12105] The religion of the Bible is the only religion that ever taught men not to be desirous of vainglory. The poets and orators, and even the philosophers and moralists, of the heathen world with one accord exhorted men to aspire to glory and fame as their chief object. The poets represented military fame as the highest good of all, and as constituting the principal happiness beyond the grave. And though in the more polished heathen nations orators inculcated love of country, and moralists dehorted men from "provoking one another" and "envying one another," yet never did those moralists or orators utter a word against the pursuit of fame for its own sake. They ascribed to a man the highest virtue provided he sought fame by lawful means: the pursuit itself was not condemned. That men are to abandon self-aggrandizement, and bring, not only their lives, but their hearts, under the influence of disinterestedness and humility, so that they shall not even desire vainglory, is a morality far too refined to have entered into the systems of heathen ethics. Such a principle is one of the peculiar glories of that religion which came from the God of purity and love, who "trieth the hearts and reins" of the children of men.

The want of such a precept in other systems of morals was a radical and essential defect.

The desire of vainglory is among the principles which have the deepest root in the human heart and the greatest influence upon human actions. It in a great measure governs the world. To leave so powerful a principle untouched and unrestrained was an oversight so great as to prove at once the insufficiency of the light of nature and the need of a Divine revelation to teach mankind their whole duty.—*E. D. Griffin.*

XIX. Objections against Christian Sentiments respecting the Principle of Vainglory met.

1 Statement of objections.

[12106] What could men do without ambition? What could the soldier? What could the schoolboy? What could any person? All would sink together into inaction and sordid indifference to every generous pursuit, and be reduced to blocks.

2 Reply to objections.

[12107] Were those principles removed which naturally impel men to action, and no other substituted in their stead, men would indeed sink into sloth and stupidity. But the gospel, while it removes the pride of man, furnishes new motives to action, more powerful and far more sublime. In the room of selfishness and pride it substitutes the love and fear of God; principles which excited all the labour and self-denial of the blessed Jesus, which awakened the enterprise of the holy apostles, and fortified with unconquerable strength the souls of the martyrs. Cannot rational beings be excited to action without pride? What, then, impels to action the holy angels, those unwearied spirits who dart like flames of fire to execute the will of God in different worlds? There has been no pride in heaven since Satan was cast out. The same motives that move the angels, the gospel inculcates on men. While all other systems of morals, ancient and modern, seize on the pride of man and employ it as the chief engine to move him to noble deeds, the gospel substitutes in its stead the love and fear of God and good-will to men. These motives are essentially necessary to make a truly good man, to give energy to his virtue against the whole array of temptations that assail his selfishness, to exalt his virtue into a noble and beneficent principle of action, to give it power over the passions of his heart and over the acts of his secret hours, to make it a uniform and persevering principle under all the changes of fortune, under the discouragement of disgrace, and even in the decline of life, when the glow of ambition becomes extinguished by the frost of age. These things pride can never do. It is wholly inadequate to be the grand moving principle of virtue. Ever variable and unstable, no calculations can be made of the direction it will give the mind, except that it will always move as the opinions of men and apparent interest sway. It cannot produce that fixed and stable integrity on which you can confidently rely. It is rather calculated to form a mean, trickish, time-serving character, on which no dependence can be placed. It is itself a cold, unsocial, repulsive principle, totally devoid of all interest in the happiness of others: and instead of uniting mankind in amity and peace, it contains in itself the most powerful causes of dissension, and wants nothing but temptation to throw the world into confusion and kindle it to a general flame. It is the torment of the mind in which it dwells, producing little else than the restlessness of insatiable desire and the mortification of defeat. It is ever making torturing comparisons, which awaken, as our text suggests, the throbs and pangs of envy. "Only by pride cometh contention." It conceives all the affronts, and is the parent of all the strife and animosities and wars which convulse the world. It needs all the restraints which have been thrown around it. All the authority of reason and conscience, added to the dread of punishment and the eagerness of men for self-preservation and peace; all the authority of religion, all the exertions of moralists and divines, all the laws and institutions of society; all these are found necessary to fence around this baleful evil, to restrain it from disturbing the order of society. Were it not thus powerfully counteracted, it would leap every barrier and overturn all the harmony and happiness of man. And even all these restraints together do not prevent it from agitating and convulsing the world. A principle which wants so many restraints cannot be good in its nature or tendency. And is this to be the great engine to give impulse to virtue? No, it is itself an odious and filthy vice, lying at the worst extreme of sin. It excited the first rebellion in the universe, and has been the parent of most of the crimes and miseries which have since agitated the dominions of Jehovah. And is it thought unreasonable to separate this pollution from the principles and motives of virtue? Is it strangely thought that virtue would suffer by such a divorce? In its feeblest and most latent movements, it cannot be anything but sin; and the more completely it is banished from the hearts of men, the purer will be their virtue, the more heavenly their piety, and the more affectionate and happy will the world be.—*E. D. Griffin.*

XX. Homiletical Hints.

[12108] 1. Manifests itself in (1) Display; (2) Boasting; (3) Presumption; (4) Insolence; (5) Depreciation of others. 2. Springs from (1) Conceit; (2) Ignorance; (3) Contempt of man; (4) Forgetfulness of God. 3. Leads to (1) Extravagance; (2) Dishonesty; (3) Humiliation; (4) Ruin.

65

WORLDLY ALLIANCE.

I. Its Evil Consequences.

1 It always exercises a deleterious influence on believers.

[12109] He who frequently converses with others, either in discourse, or entertainment, or affairs, or in any familiar way of living, must necessarily either become like his companions, or bring them over to his own way. It is impossible to touch a chimney sweep without being partaker of his soot.—*Epictetus.*

2 It is always attended by Divine displeasure.

[12110] "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished." The men of Babel confederated to build a tower against the Almighty, but were confounded. The kings of the earth set themselves against the Lord (Psa. ii.) But He has them in derision. All unholy alliances have the curse of God upon them, and must come to nought.

II. Meaning of the Prohibition to have Fellowship with the Ungodly.

[12111] "Have no fellowship" (Eph. v. 11). It does not mean, of course, that Christians are to have no intercourse or dealings with the ungodly. This could not be, and ought not to be if it could. It means that they are to have no spiritual identification with them, no thoughts, purposes, feelings alike; that, like Christ, they are to be "separate from sinners;" morally detached as the lamp from the darkness. (Cf. 1 Cor. v. 11; 2 Cor. vi. 14–18.)—*Dr. Thomas.*

III. Extent of the Prohibition of Unholy Fellowships.

1 In regard to marriage.

[12112] When we dispose of ourselves at our own wills and pleasures, being led thereunto by our own choice, without consulting with God, or upon carnal reasons, without the conduct of God's providence, we transgress the order which God hath set in the first precedent of marriage, and cannot expect that our coming together should be comfortable.—*T. Manton, D.D.*

2 In regard to partnerships.

[12113] I have been a good deal puzzled about some partnerships. I have known some strange associations. For example, I have known a church officer, who has led the devotions of the church, enter into partnership with a grovelling man who never hesitated to use profane language in the warehouse, &c. This has been a puzzle to me, because I have not known how two could walk together except they were agreed, and because I have gone upon the principle that there could be no communion between light and darkness, Christ and Belial.—*Dr. Parker.*

IV. Duty about Disentangling Ourselves from Wrong Associations.

[12114] If you want to get back, I counsel you to quit all your bad associations. One unholy intimacy will fill your soul with moral distemper. Break it off, whatever it costs you. Go home, and dissolve the partnership at once. —*Talmage.*

66

CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD.

I. Its Definition and Nature.

[12115] To be conformed to this world is to be like it in its hollowness, in its insincerity, in its cowardice, in its envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness; in its cringing adulation of mere rank and wealth; in its measuring all things by money; in its worship of the present and the seen; in its inability to appreciate, and its unwillingness to learn to appreciate, what is real, and noble, and good; in its persistent efforts to drag down all that presumes to rise above its own petty level—that is the world-spirit to which we are forbidden to be conformed.—*Edrupp.*

II. Its Prevalence.

[12116] Among the young people of the present day, the door at which evil influences enter, which countervail parental instruction and example, I am persuaded, is yielding to the ways of so-called "good society." By dress, books, and amusements an atmosphere is formed which is not that of Christianity. More than ever do I feel that our families must stand in a kind but determined opposition to the fashions of the world, breasting the waves, like the Eddystone lighthouse. And I have found nothing yet which requires more courage and independence than to rise even a little, but decidedly above the *par* of the religious world around us. Surely the way in which we commonly go on is not that way of self-denial, and sacrifice, and cross-bearing which the New Testament talks of! Then is the offence of the cross ceased. Our slender influence on the circles of our friends is often to be traced to our leaving so little difference between us.—*Rev. J. W. Alexander, D.D.*

[12117] We are all far too much influenced by the thought, What will people say? We are all too apt to do things, and go on in certain ways that we may be like other people. That is slavery, sinful, sorry slavery; but this conformity to the whims and customs of the world is

a slavery only too common in the present day. —*Marshall Lang.*

[12118] Is not the world in the church? Is there always an unquestionable difference between our spirit and the spirit of those who in their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, their fashions of opinion, standards of value, estimates of profit and loss, and in all the laws and stimuli of their souls, are shut up within the limits of this present life? In marriage, in commercial partnerships, in the change of a house, in the choice of a school, and even in their modes of worship and of work, is our judgment—the needle of the mind's compass—never disturbed by the world's magnetism? Do we never betray undue preference for the paying virtues? Do we never worship success? Do we never follow a mere majority? Are we never, never after "the way of the world"?—*Stanford.*

III. Its Evil Consequences.

1 It destroys Christian simplicity and chasteness of soul.

[12119] Chasteness of soul in our relations to Christ is too little prized, too feebly longed after. How many and deep are the stains upon our bridal robes, that should be so white and clean! Conformity to the world, following after its fashions and amusements, seeking its filthy lucre, grovelling for its honours, pampering of self, shrinking from the cross, putting human methods and observances and dependences proudly in place of Christ; indulging in fears and doubts instead of taking Him simply at His word—it is in such ways that our minds, through the subtlety of the serpent, are beguiled and corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

2 It is incompatible with the true service of Christ.

[12120] "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" The answer is negative—None. The opposition between these two, Christ and Belial, is most hostile. Christ is the author of our salvation, Belial of our perdition; Christ is the restorer of all things, Belial the destroyer; Christ is the prince of light, Belial the prince of darkness. In such hostile opposition there can be no concord—no concord between the author of our salvation and the author of our perdition; no concord between the restorer of all things and the destroyer of all things; no concord between the prince of light and the prince of darkness; therefore they that believe in Christ are not to have familiarity with unbelievers.

IV. Encouragement to the Duty of Nonconformity to the World.

[12121] Multitudes of souls are daily lost by rooted habits and long-continued custom in sin. When men have been long settled in an evil way, they are difficultly reclaimed. Physicians find it hard to cure a cachexy or ill habit of body; but it is far more difficult to cure an ill custom and habit in sin. Jer. xiii. 23: "Can the leopard change his spots, or the Ethiopian his skin? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil." The spots of a leopard and hue of an Ethiopian are not by way of external accidental adhesion; if so, washing would fetch them off; but they are innate and contempered—belonging to the constitution, and not to be altered. So are sinful habits and customs in the minds of sinners; by this means it becomes a second nature as it were, and strongly determines the mind to sin: *A teneris assuescere multum est.* It is a great matter to be accustomed this way or that, saith Seneca; yea, *Caput rei est, hoc vel illo modo, hominem assuefieri.* It is the very head or root of the matter to be so or so accustomed, saith Aristotle; very much of the strength of sin. Hence the importance of the duty of constant and systematic self-examination. There is nothing so hard as to overtake arrears in self-control and self-culture. Also there is nothing which so lowers the spiritual life as a sympathetic and uncalled-for contact with the worldly or non-Christian elements of society.

[12122] It would not be complaisance but cowardice, it would be a sinful softness, which allowed affinity in taste to imperil your faith or your virtue. It would be the same sort of courtesy which, in the equatorial forest, for the sake of its beautiful leaf, lets the liana, with its strangling arms, run up the plantain or orange, and pays the forfeit in blasted boughs and total ruin. It would be the same sort of courtesy which, for fear of appearing rude or inhospitable, took into dock the infected vessel, or welcomed, not as a patient, but a guest, the plague-stricken stranger.—*Jas. Hamilton.*

67

FRIENDSHIP OF THE WORLD.

I. Its Counterpart.

1 Enmity against God.

[12123] He that will be a friend of the world will be an enemy of God! All that is in the world embraces more than mere mammon, concerning which Christ says we cannot serve God and it together; it is possessions, lusts, and honour, avarice, pleasure, pride, which cannot consist with the love of the Father (1 John ii. 15, 16).—*Sherlock.*

[12124] Here (James iv. 4), we have the very pregnant principle laid down — a principle capable of very wide illustration — that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God;" that a man, *i.e.*, in becoming the friend of the world, in that very act constitutes himself the

enemy of God; that it is not necessary for God to pronounce such a friendship to be an act of hostility to Him—it declares itself to be such by the very nature of the case.—*W. Roberts.*

[12125] Know ye not that the world is God's great enemy, and that the very "friendship of the world"—that is to say, a disposition to join in alliance with the world, and to be like the world—is in itself enmity towards God; it is thus that a quarrel arises between us and Him to whom we belong, the harmony of our lives is broken, joy is banished from our life, and the energy of that life is lost.—*Aitken.*

[12126] Once more we have a distant echo here (James iv. 4) from the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vi. 24; Luke xvi. 13). Here also (as in James i. 8) stress is laid on the fact that the neutrality of a divided allegiance is impossible. In that warfare, therefore, we must choose our side. We take it, even if we think that we do not choose it. The mere wish and inclination to be on one side involves, *ipso facto*, antagonism to the other.—*Plumptre.*

II. ITS INCONSISTENCY WITH THE VAIN PROFESSION OF A CHRISTIAN.

[12127] What? a Christian, and yet worldly! A Christian, and yet sensual! A Christian, and yet proud! You that are given to pleasures, do you believe in Christ that was a man of sorrows? You that are carried after the pomp and vanity of the world, do you believe in Christ, whose kingdom was not of this world? You that are proud and lofty, do you profess an interest in Christ, who said, "Learn of Me, for I am humble and lowly?" 'Tis in vain for you to talk of His dying for sinners, and boasting of His cross, when you never felt the virtue of it (Gal. vi. 14). What experience have you, that His cross was the cross of the Son of God, when your hearts linger as inordinately after carnal things as ever? Have you gotten anything by it? Do you feel any weakening of lusts, any decay of sin? Are you planted into the efficacy of His death? (Rom. vi. 5.) If not, how can you glory in the cross of Christ?

III. ITS CONSEQUENCES IN REGARD TO THE INDIVIDUAL LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN.

[12128] In its consequences (1) it leads to ungodly unions, marriage, partnerships, companionships. 2. It corrupts the heart and blights the life. 3. It often leads to utter apostasy and ruin.

IV. ITS CRIPPLING INFLUENCE UPON THE CHURCH'S REAL POWER.

[12129] The church loses her power of attraction when she relinquishes her atmosphere of repulsion. The profession which will not offend the careless cannot teach the earnest. If the salt have lost its savour, it cannot heal the bitter waters.—*Schönberg Cotta Family.*

V. WARNING,

1 **It is a sin to which we are especially tempted on account of the present fashionableness of Christianity.**

[12130] Christianity, grown to be the fashion of the day, trips in and out of the booths at Vanity Fair, decorated, as Bunyan quaintly has it, "in her silver slippers." Who would not follow her? How good it is to be rich and virtuous too! how excellent to keep all the comforts here, and feel satisfied that Dives need fear nothing hereafter! how admirable thus to make the best of both, and, in the midst of busy luxury, Dorcas societies, parish meetings, boards for improving the condition of the poor, letters from polite secretaries of charitable institutions, and votes of thanks from local boards, to let life glide calmly on, undisturbed by that stern voice which has told us, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon!"

2 **It is a sin which we should especially shun.**

[12131] Whatever it cost thee, flee spiritual adultery. Have no friendship with the world. However tempted thereto by pleasure or profit, contract no intimacy with worldly-minded men. Cut off the right hand, pluck out the right eye if necessary. It is not an indifferent thing. Thy life is at stake: eternal life or eternal death.—*Wesley.*

68

LOVE OF THE WORLD.

I. THE IMPORT OF THE PROHIBITION AGAINST LOVING THE WORLD.

[12132] By the world is meant the world-spirit. When therefore you are exhorted not to love the world, remember that it is of the pervading disposition of your souls we speak, of the way in which you are to look on and engage in all earthly things.—*Edrupp.*

[12133] Christ would teach us that worldly things should be sought in a moderate proportion; if we have sufficient for a day, for the present want, we should not grasp at too much. Ships lightly laden will pass through the sea, but when we take too great a burden, the ship will easily sink with every storm. We have sore troubles to pass through in the world; now when we are overburdened with present things we have more snares and temptations.—*T. Manton, D.D.*, 1620–1677.

[12134] They pass best over the world who trip over it quickly, for it is but a bog; if we stop, we sink.—*Queen Elizabeth.*

II. Dissuasives.

1 The fleeting character of the world.

[12135] World fleeting. It passeth away like 1. a dream of the night. 2. The mist of the morning. 3. A shadow. 4. A wave of the sea. 5. A rainbow. 6. A flower. 7. A tent in the desert.

2 The instability of the world.

[12136] In Chili where the ground is subject to frequent shocks of earthquake, the houses are built of lowly height and of unenduring structure; it is of little use to dig deep foundations, and pile up high walls where the very earth is unstable; it would be foolish to build as for ages when the whole edifice may be in ruins in a week. So this poor fleeting world is not worthy of our love. We shall be wise to build our hopes upon it slightly if at all, and set our affections on the more stable and enduring things above.—*Spurgeon* (*adapted*).

3 The subtle influence of the world to draw off the heart from heavenly things.

[12137] Take heed that a subtle love of things seen does not supplant in you spiritual sympathies and aspirations. While you are alive to all that is noble and beautiful both in nature and art, be wise enough not to forget that the world and the most glorious things in it will by and by be dissolved, and that the objects of Christian faith alone will remain for ever.—*J. D. Geden.*

[12138] The young man in the gospel went very far—thou art not far from the kingdom of God; but he had rich possessions, and these golden weights hindered him from the kingdom (Luke xviii. 23). Jonathan pursued the battle till he came at the honeycomb, and then he stood still (1 Sam. xiv. 27). Many are forward for heaven till they taste the sweetness of the world; but when they come at the honeycomb, then they stand still and go no further; *Fœnus pecuniæ sunus animæ.* Those who have escaped the rocks of gross sins, yet have been cast away upon the golden sands.

1 The chilling and crippling effect of the world upon our souls.

[12139] An eagle flying over some ice valleys saw a dead body lying, which had been frozen. The bird descended from its lofty flight, and was so long time feasting on the carcase that, when it thought to mount again, it could not, for its wings had been frozen to the ice on which it rested.—*Bowes.*

[12140] A pigeon oppressed by excessive thirst saw a goblet of water painted on a sign-board. Not supposing it to be only a picture, she flew towards it with a loud whirr, and unwittingly dashed against the sign-board, and jarred herself terribly. Having broken her wings by the blow, she fell to the ground and was killed by one of the bystanders.—*Æsop.*

III. Its Cure.

[12141] The love of the world is only unlearned by the love of the Father. . . . And there is only one way in which that higher love is learned. The cross of Christ is the measure of God's love to us and the measure of the meaning of man's existence. When once a man has learned the spirit of the cross the power of the world is gone, and no man need bid him love not the world.—*F. W. Robertson.*

IV. Homiletical Hints.

[12142] I. The nature of the forbidden world. 1. *Negative.* (1) Not the material world, (2) not the persons in the world, (3) not the occupations in the world. 2. *Positive.* The spirit of the world. (1) Attachment to the outward, (2) to the transitory, (3) to the unreal. II. The reasons for which we are forbidden to love it. 1. The love of the world is incompatible with the love of the Father. 2. Its transitoriness (1) in itself, (2) in its power of exciting desire. 3. The solitary permanence of Christian action. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."—*Ibid.*

69

WORLDLINESS.

I. Its Meaning and Manifestation.

[12143] Worldliness means likeness to the world. (1) In its hollowness and insincerity; (2) in its cowardice; (3) in its envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness; (4) in its cringing adulation of mere rank and wealth, measuring all things by money; (5) in its worship of the present and the seen; (6) in its inability to appreciate, and in its unwillingness to learn to appreciate, what is real and noble and good; (7) in its persistent attempts to drag down all that presumes to rise above its own petty level.

II. Its Real Nature and Essence.

[12144] To live as thousands live, mainly it would seem to store up their little dues, slowly or quickly to scrape themselves up a competence and leave the rest of their substance to their babes, to join in the race for wealth, to live without public spirit, without love to man, with no care but for our own selfish comforts, grandeurs, or interests, to take the print of a mammon-worshipping age, and so to live dismal, illiberal, acquisitive lives, is a terrible danger to us all.

[12145] Worldliness is not love of men, occupation in the pursuits of men, love of music, painting, poetry, use of all the arts and sciences

which add to the comfort and wealth of life, or conformity to the harmless manners and customs of the place in which we live ; it is a spirit of life, a way of regarding and doing all things that we have to do—a hollow, foolish, or ignoble way.

[12146] Worldliness is the attractive power of something present in opposition to something to come.—*Parr.*

III. Its Constituent Elements.

[12147] Worldliness consists in these three : attachment to the outward ; attachment to the transitory ; attachment to the unreal : in opposition to love for the inward, the eternal, the true ; and the one of these affections is necessarily expelled by the other.—*F. W. Robertson.*

[12148] Consists in (1) pleasure-seeking ; (2) frivolity ; (3) love of display ; (4) vanity ; (5) fear of man, &c.

IV. Its Various Forms and Developments.

[12149] Sin has a wide dominion and many servants. On the broad road there are so many paths which never intersect and interfere with each other. Men of lofty intellect, of noble purpose, of philanthropic activity, never dream that they are ruled by the same despot who leads the vicious and degraded captive at his will. Yet sin connects them all ; it is one way, and leadeth to destruction.

[12150] Evil is never so deadly as when it puts on an air of respectability. Jesus says that the publicans and harlots should go into the kingdom of heaven before the Pharisee ; and to this day doubtless His everlasting words come true, and more open sinners are saved than decorous Pharisees. The worldliness which most of us have most to fear is a negative worldliness—a worldliness without great sins, because it has not great temptations ; a quiet, unobtrusive worldliness, so unpretending that it hides itself even from our own notice ; a worldliness which the more effectually deposes God, because it does not overtly rebel against Him—nay, in words it owns His being, re-enacts, without reference to Him, some of His laws, yet shaped so that they should not press upon it ; a worldliness which is the more hopeless because it substitutes self for God so universally, yet so noiselessly and imperceptibly, that the soul, like Samson, does not know that God is departed from it, and that it is living without Him.

V. Its Misery.

[12151] What a great blank of the soul comes upon the man who accepts this life : how all the ardours of his early enthusiasm die away ; how all that was free, and delicate, and noble, and attractive about him, all artless simplicity, all the tenderness, all the romance, all the chivalry, all the poetry of his existence gets congealed and hardened into conceit and commonplace ; how in his easy life evils come upon him which, as has been well said, "vex less but mortify more, which suck the blood though they do not shed it, and ossify the heart though they do not torture it." The rust and the canker eat away all of the little soul that is left, and the scurf of a heartless conventionality lies thick all over the daily life. Men become like the corpse of the ancient Scythian lord, which was carried around, in its stately chariot, from house to house, and the banquet spread before the glazed eyes in the houses of its friends.

[12152] The world is in our own hearts, and there must be our victory over it. We cannot escape from it by running away from it ; wherever we go we take it with us. Refinement will not save us from worldliness. Balaam led a very retired life in the mountains of the East, but all the while his heart was hankering after the honours and rewards of the distant world beneath. And so have thousands found.

VI. Its Cause.

[12153] The heart's affections will certainly twine about something—if not God, then, of necessity, the world. In the human soul, as in nature, there will be, there can be, no perfect vacuum. In vain do we cry, "Love not the world ;" the love of the world will dwell and must dwell in the soul, unless indeed there dwells there a higher, purer, stronger love—a love for God and for all His holy ways.

VII. Its Tests.

[12154] One sign of excessive worldliness is great anxiety of mind in our worldly pursuits.

[12155] The great test by which the Christian should judge, is the effect of his worldly business upon his religious duties.

[12156] When the duties of devotion are regularly performed, it may be with the world uppermost in our hearts. When the Bible is read, the eye may see its words, but the thoughts may be upon some plan for the day, so that we may read as we would with one at our side calling us away to something we love better. We may pray, and thoughts of our gains may be running through the mind almost as freely as if our hands were employed in gathering them. We may go to the house of God, and seem very attentive and devout, while none but God sees how much we have bought and sold, or how much money changed in His temple. Or we may toil so hard through the week as to lose all our relish for Sunday duties, and make the Lord's day chiefly a day for our jaded powers to recruit, so that we may start fresh again when the field of labour is open. Now, whoever pursues his worldly affairs in such a way that

they have this effect upon his religious duties, is clearly in the class of hearers described in our text. He has no sabbath, no spiritual seasons; all is worldliness from week to week, and from year to year. Even his sacred times are worldly; his prayers are worldly; and all the difference is that in one case on the sabbath, he is like an animal caged and restrained; and in other cases, like the same creature let loose, while its nature remains unchanged.

VIII. Its Unsatisfactoriness and Evil.

1 It is selfish good which is offered to us after all by the gospel of selfishness.

[12157] Worldliness must be selfish, for it is clear that the pursuit of pleasure only becomes possible when we centre our thoughts on self. How will this affect me? is the one question which every event suggests to thought. Accordingly, in its more vulgar forms, the worldly life disgusts us by a selfishness which is "naked and not ashamed." It recommends us coarsely to "take care of number one," as though "number one" were not, as it is, about the most worthless thing in the universe of being. Or it sings most untunefully about "a little pelf to provide for yourself," with a mean-spirited glorying in its purblind limitation of view. The same spirit, in its more refined forms, speaks with contempt of the "herd," and wraps itself in a mantle of supercilious pride. Yet a selfish life is essentially a life of misery. By one of those moral paradoxes which are so strange, and yet so beautiful, the only way to happiness is to give up seeking for it and to seek for something better and higher. "Go teach the orphan boy to read, or teach the orphan girl to sew;" forget your narrow, restless self; let your heart flow out in sympathy with others, and you have taken one step toward inward peace. He who has no love for others will one day cry in vain for others to love him. For love is life, and those who live without it are dead while they live. There has been One Life in the world which was real, before the grandeur of which men of every land have worshipped. Understand that life if you can. When you have laid bare the core of it you will find the secret to be this—utter, absolute, self-sacrificing love. Yes, the life of the world is death; a life of love, and that alone, has reality.—*J. F. Stevenson.*

2 The worldly gospel gives no basis of security.

[12158] That seems strange, for its great promise is security. It professes to deal with solid realities. Whatever others may do, it will lead you no moon-struck chase after impalpable abstractions. The good which it gives shall be solid good—something capable of being weighed and counted. Spiritual things, what are they? They are only thoughts and feelings, at best they are beliefs and hopes; but these are plain, unmistakable realities, visible to the eye, and palpable to the touch. And yet, wonderful to tell, these substantial certainties are precisely the things on which it is impossible to get a secure hold. They are for ever passing from our grasp. Money melts away, pleasure palls on the senses, the very world is in constant change. It turns out to be the fact that our thoughts and feelings, our love and faith, are the only possessions which are permanently ours. These last for ever, and only these. The soul which rests on the unchanging love of the Saviour is anchored in security amid the "wreck of matter and the crash of worlds." Truth, purity, righteousness, love, self-sacrifice —these are facts in the nature of God; they are "eternal in the heavens." But nothing else is eternal. This outer world, so solid-seeming, is, in fact, an unsubstantial shadow. The first impression which we receive is the exact reverse of the truth—it is things seen which are temporal; and what we began by calling impalpable abstractions turn out to be the only facts which know no change. The gospel of the Epicurean life, therefore, belies its promise; it gives us no security. God is eternal; Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; the regenerate life is a living spring of joy in the soul which rises everlastingly. Here, sirs, you touch the very basis of reality, and build upon a rock. But neglect this, and you will find that "the pillared firmament is rottenness, and earth's base built on stubble."—*Ibid.*

3 The gospel of worldliness fails to bring satisfaction to those who follow its rules.

[12159] This is singularly true. The most discontented, unresting class of men in the world are those who give themselves to the pursuit of pleasure on system. As they grow older, they almost always become cynics, as we say—that is, they sneer and snarl at everything and everybody. They go through the world with a curled lip, spitting the venom of their bitterness all around them with a beautiful impartiality. I have known such, men who measured others by themselves, and so lost all faith in the honour of man and the purity of woman. It is possible to sit in the seat of the scorner till a man scorns everything, including himself, and this last with a good deal of reason. And yet it is only to a warped and biassed view that anything is contemptible, except moral evil. Great men never sneer; they see too much, even in simple men and common things, to despise them. I was once looking through a microscope at some fragments of guano. So wonderful, so exquisitely beautiful were they, that I felt the vision of them to be a joy for ever. A young man passed me at the moment, and I called his attention, explaining briefly what they were. He tittered a smug little laugh, and walked away, saying that he did not care for such things; yet I know nobody who has more unoccupied room in his cranium than that young man. You might write over his brow, "Lodgings to let," and do him no wrong. In truth, one of the worst effects

of pleasure-seeking is that it deadens the heart to the simple natural joys which are the best gifts of God in this world. It poisons life with a vague sense of unreality. It sets a man crying, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity"—truly the most miserable, unhelpful, sterile announcement which can be made, even if it be true, which it is not. No, it is not the world which is empty, for it is full of beauty; nor man, for he is fearfully and wonderfully made. The emptiness, the vanity, the sham is in the worldling's heart, and he sees other things through the mist of his own thoughts. Depend upon it there is no satisfaction to be had for men in mere pleasure-hunting. And I will tell you why. There is that in our souls which is related to the Infinite and Eternal. We are thirsting after the water of life, though we know it not. The aching void in the worldling's heart is an indirect testimony to the nobleness of his nature. The prodigal would fain have stayed his hunger with the husks that the swine did eat, but a man cannot live on swine's food, and that precisely because he is a man. Oh, sirs, there standeth One among you whom ye know not. His face is so marred more than any man, and His form than the sons of men. And yet, O blessed Lord, to whom shall we go but unto thee? Thou, Thou only, hast the words of eternal life.

"No voice but Thine can give me rest,
And bid my fears depart;
No love but Thine can make me blest,
And satisfy my heart."

—*Ibid.*

4 The gospel of the world is irreligion.

[12160] Religion, or the sense of a boundless destiny, is a fact in the nature of man. It is the mightiest fact in his history also. It has built temples, woven creeds, invented ceremonies, animated heroisms, and written itself in a thousand ways upon all human things. You may try to put it down, but it will be too strong for you. What happens when a power or faculty of our nature is forcibly suppressed? I will tell you; men go mad. The oppressed tendency, like the volcanic fires of the earth, smoulders underground till it gathers ungovernable force, and then bursts forth scattering devastation and death. So it is with man's religious nature. Every attempt to keep it down, however it may succeed for a time, only brings it out in the long run in violent and perverted forms. Men try to live on this world and cannot, and then they take to revolution and bloodshed, with the worship of some abstraction of liberty or equality, or else they descend into spiritual idiotcy, and finish by turning tables, and finding mighty revelations in raps upon the floor. The superstition of the day is in near relation to its worldliness. I know only one deliverance from either, and that, thank God, is a deliverance from both. It is found in rational spiritual religion, or, as the apostle expresses it, "repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."—*Ibid.*

IX. Difficulty of Drawing a Sharp Line of Demarcation between the World and the Church.

[12161] Worldliness is not a sharply outlined sin like theft or drunkenness or lechery; it is a pervading principle, a spirit, a temper which may lurk in our hearts unknown to us, and yet taint everything we think or speak or do.

[12162] It is impossible for any one to make a list of occupations and amusements and call those worldly and those not worldly. No one can draw an exact line in these matters, and no one is authorized to do so for other people. Human life is too complicated for this; every man must be guided by his own reason and conscience, enlightened by the Spirit and Word of God. Let the love of Christ rule in your heart, and then the love of all things lovely will follow in its time and place.

X. The Possibility of being "in the World and not of The World."

[12163] Many whose names are brightest in the scroll of scriptural heroes were in a good sense of the word "men of the world," men of affairs, guiding nations, building cities, ruling men—Moses, Joseph, Daniel, David, Nehemiah, and a host of others. But of course the great example is our Lord, who "in the world o'ercame the world," that we might overcome. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith."

XI. Difference between the Sincere and Insincere in regard to the Matter of sinning.

[12164] The watch is nought that goes only at first winding up, and stands all the day after; and so is that heart that desires not always to keep in spiritual motion. I confess there may be a great difference in the standing of two watches; one from the very watch itself, because it hath not the right make, and this will ever do so till altered; another possibly is true work, only some dust clogs the wheels, or a fall hath a little battered it, which removed, it will go well again. And there is as great difference between the sincere soul and hypocrite in this case; the sincere soul may be interrupted in its spiritual motion and Christian course, but it is from some temptation that at present clogs him; but he hath a new nature which inclineth to a constant motion in holiness, and doth, upon removing the present impediment, return to its natural exercise of godliness; but the hypocrite fails in the very constitution and frame of his spirit; he hath not a principle of grace in him to keep him moving. Like an ill-made watch, he must first be taken all to pieces.—*Salter.*

SECTION XV.

CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS.

PART I.

CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS.

PAGE

PART I.—INTRODUCTION 232

PART II.—THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN 284

PART III.—BREACH OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN 381

PART IV.—RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN 391

PART I.

INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY.

SYLLABUS.

		PAGE
I.	Nature of Theology	232
II.	Its Sources	233
III.	Its Conditions	235
IV.	Its Central Truths and Fundamental Principles	236
V.	Rise of its Dogmas	237
VI.	Leading Characteristics of Christian Theology	238
VII.	Characteristics of its Doctrine	240
VIII.	Its General Leading Departments	241
IX.	Its Special Leading Departments	241
X.	Its Scientific Features	248
XI.	Its Technical Terminology	251
XII.	Its Progress and Development	252
XIII.	Its Relations	256
XIV.	Its Necessity	265
XV.	Its Services	269
XVI.	Its Study and Exposition	271
XVII.	Its Aim and Purpose	272
XVIII.	Tests of the Verity of Christian Theology	273
XIX.	The Origin of Creeds generally	273
XX.	Classification of the Church's Creeds	274
XXI.	Distinction between Ancient and Modern, or between Symbolical and Confessional, Theology properly considered	276
XXII.	Specimens of Theological Systems	277
XXIII.	The Hostility to Christian Dogmatic Teaching on Theology	278
XXIV.	The Dangers to which Doctrine is Liable	280
XXV.	The Effects of Good and Bad Doctrine contrasted	280

SECTION XV.

CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS.

PART I.

INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY.

I. Nature of Theology.

1 Generally considered.

(1) *As to Christian theology.*

[12165] Theology strictly signifies a discourse concerning God. Aristotle divided all sciences into physics, mathematics, and theology. The Apostle John was called by the Fathers "the theologian," because he dealt largely with the divinity of Christ. Sometimes the word is still used in this strict sense when opposed to anthropology, soteriology, ecclesiology, as departments of theology in its wider sense. Theology is sometimes called the science of the supernatural; sometimes it is called the science of religion. But both these definitions are vague and unsatisfactory. Theology is the science of the facts of Divine revelations as far as those facts concern the nature of God, and our relation to Him as His creatures, as sinners, and as the subjects of redemption.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

[12166] Christian theology is the science of God and of Divine things, based upon the revelation which He has made to mankind in Jesus Christ, and variously systematized in the Christian church. God is its source, subject, and end. The stricter and earlier use of the word limited it to the doctrine of the Triune God and His attributes. But in the modern usage it includes the whole compass of the science of religion, or the relations of all things to God. This gives it its unity, and dignity, and sanctity. It is *a Deo, de Deo, in Deum:* from God in its origin, concerning God in its substance, leading to God in all its issues; His *name* is in it.—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

(2) *As to ethnic theology.*

[12167] The ancients had a threefold theology. First, the mythic or fabulous, which flourished among their poets, and was chiefly employed in the theogony or genealogy of their gods; secondly, the political, which was embraced chiefly by the priests, politicians, and people, as most suitable to the quiet and order of society; and thirdly, the physical or natural, which was cultivated mainly by the philosophers and their followers, as being most in accordance with nature and reason. This latter, physical theology, acknowledged only one Supreme God, but admitted the agency of many subordinate deities, thus multiplying "gods many and lords many."—*A. Morton Brown, LL.D.*

2 Specially considered.

(1) *As to doctrine.*

[12168] In the Bible, the word "doctrine" means simply teaching, instruction. It was a moral direction, a simple maxim, or a familiar practical truth. It certainly was not that thing which theologians have made doctrine to be—a mere philosophical abstraction. There are few heresies in the world more real than the very idea of an abstract doctrine presented as God's truth. —*Beecher.*

(2) *As to the dogmatic in theology.*

a. Its explanation.

[12169] Dogmatic theology treats of the doctrines of the Christian faith held by the community of believers, in other words, by the church. A confessing and witnessing church cannot be conceived to exist without a definite sum of doctrines or dogmas. Dogmatics is the science which presents and proves the Christian doctrines, regarded as forming a connected system.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[12170] Christian dogmatics is concisely and accurately explained in the language of St. Jude as that which was "once for all delivered to the saints." It is thus employed, not to signify any spiritual faculty in us, nor yet the exercise by us of such a faculty, but simply to indicate the sum of those Divine revelations which have been received by the saints—obtained, as St. Peter teaches us, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Similarly Augustine used the word to signify the collective sum of those beliefs which might be regarded as constituting the confessional badge of the Christian, and which, in this general application,

should prove worthy of the name of the Catholic faith: *Primum ergo fides Catholica Christiano necessaria est quia in ipsa distinguuntur filii Dei a filiis diaboli.* The term has ever since become the current expression for Christian doctrine, and so is referred immediately to the general body of religious truth. In a precisely similar manner we now find, especially among German theologians, a ready interchange, without any idea of suggesting a distinction, in the designation of their doctrinal systems as either Christian dogmatics or a doctrine of faith—*ChristlicheGlaubenslehre.—J. Macpherson, M.A.*

[12171] The word "dogma" occurs in the New Testament in the sense of injunctions or ordinances to which obedience was required, such as the decree of Cæsar (Luke ii. 1, comp. Acts xvii. 7), the decisions of the Apostolic Council at Jerusalem (Acts xvi. 4, 17), and the precepts of the Mosaic law (Ephes. ii. 15; Col. ii. 14); and not in the sense of doctrines proposed to faith. In the writings of the early fathers the word signifies the fundamental truths of revelation, such as they were delivered by the apostles in their oral teaching and their writings, and before they became acted upon by the speculative intellect of the church. Philosophy assigned to each science its peculiar dogmata, or first principles; and those of Christianity were its historical facts with their inspired explanations. But since religion leaves no faculty of man unaffected by its influence, and appeals to the intellectual as well as the emotional part of his nature (as indeed faith, the most comprehensive of its synonyms, always presupposes something to be believed), it was inevitable that in process of time attempts should be made to systematize and arrange the materials furnished partly by Scripture, and partly by the implicit faith of the church; and this necessarily in the current language, and under the influence of the philosophy, of the age.—*E. A. Litton.*

[12172] "Dogma" is only another word for a positive truth, positively asserted in contrast to an opinion, a conjecture, or a speculation. It is a proposition regarded as so certainly true, as to be presented for acceptance but not for discussion. This is the historical meaning of the word, both in its pagan and its Christian usage. In the pagan philosophy it was the descriptive term for that great school of thought which maintained the reality of the knowledge acquired by the right use of the intellectual faculties, in distinction to the negations of the sceptics and the speculations of the mystics. In Christian philosophy it expresses the theology based on the authority of Scripture and the judgment of the fathers. Dogma expresses a settled and certain truth, an attained resting-place for belief, from which, as from the axioms of mathematical science, we may confidently argue.—*E. Garbett, M.A.*

b. Its distinction from false dogmatism.

[12173] Dogmatism has become a term of reproach, and, in our modern sense of the word, rightly. We express by it the habit of mind which in an over-confidence on its own individual powers is disposed to depreciate the judgment of other men, and to assert personal opinions with confident arrogance as certainly and indisputably true. Thus employed, the word bears a very different meaning to the δογματίζω and δογματικὸς of classic usage, for it expresses, not a mode of thought, but a moral disposition. But the tone of authority, consistent and necessary in the infallible, is inconsistent and offensive to the fallible, because by using it the fallible disavows his fallibility. Positiveness of statement is as congruous with what is Divine as it is incongruous with what is human. A settled and positive truth must necessarily be stated in words sharply defined and trenchant, because if it were otherwise the vagueness and uncertainty of the expressions would attach vagueness and uncertainty to the thing expressed. But in matters of human opinion the errability of the speaker suggests modest qualifications in the words he uses. The dogmatical temper is an assumption of superiority on the part of one man over other men, such as Job rebuked: "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you." It is justly offensive, and if modern thought only protested against this dogmatical temper, every candid and honest thinker would sympathize with the protest.—*Ibid.*

II. Its Sources.

1 The supreme revelation of Scripture.

(1) *The Bible supplies the facts in an easily attainable way.*

a. The completed facts.

[12174] The "book of nature" comes far short of the "book of revelation" in point of clearness. In the book of revelation we are brought face to face, not with the dumb phenomena of nature, whose significance may tax the mightiest intellects, but with living intelligences, who address us in human speech, or through personal acts whose import they are careful to explain. A theologian studying the Epistle to the Romans, or the Epistle to the Hebrews, in order to deduce therefrom the elements of his science, is in a very different position from that occupied by Kepler, as through weary years of watching he traced and tested the planetary motions along his hypothetical curves. In the one case, the facts are stated or enacted; in the other, they have to be discovered by toilsome experiments. The great discovery of Kepler, that the planets move in elliptical orbits with the sun in one of the foci, is simply a fact of nature; but surely no one will say that it was as easy to find it there as it is to find out from the book of revelation that salvation is not by works, but by faith. The discovery of Newton, that every particle of matter in the universe attracts every other particle with a force varying directly as its mass

and inversely as the square of its distance, is simply a fact of nature; but who will say that it is as clearly revealed there as the doctrine of substitution is revealed in the Old Testament and the New?

[12175] Christian doctrine does not ground itself on speculation. It begins from the region and testimony of the senses. Its materials are facts, and it is itself the interpretation and application of them. It is therefore reasonable that the facts should be completed before they are clearly interpreted and fully applied. Jesus must have died and risen again before the doctrine concerning His death and resurrection can be brought to light. Not till the Son of man is glorified can we expect to arrive at a stage of doctrine which shall give all the meaning and the virtue of facts, which till then were not completed. Up to that time we are in the midst of a history of which His own saying is true, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."—*T. O. Bernard, M.A.*

b. The facts which theology is to generalize into a system.

[12176] The observed and recorded facts which are the data of Christian dogma are not of man but of God; *e.g.*, the words "God sent His Son into the world" are the assertion of a fact. "The Son of man came to give His life a ransom for many" is the assertion of another fact. "He hath made peace by the blood of His cross" is a third fact. "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" is a fourth fact. In this way we might pass through all the dogmatic parts of Scripture and show that every truth is a fact, the statement either of something that has been done, that is being done, or that will be done by God in the sphere of the Unseen. Now nothing is left for man to do but the generalization, and in proportion as that generalization admits nothing but the facts, Christian dogma acquires the force of certain and demonstrated truth.—*E. Garbett, M.A.*

(2) *The Bible vouches for the facts.*

[12177] The Bible is the source of all systematic theology. Here are found the materials for this science. It is a first principle that we are to rely implicitly upon the authority of the Holy Scriptures. The only substantial basis of theology is the certainty of the facts and principles on which it is founded. The doctrine of inspiration is, therefore, the chief buttress of the whole structure. If this be denied everything is unstable; and, like a fortress erected on quicksand, the system is rather a source of danger than a defence to those who have sheltered themselves within it. Several characteristics of the Bible as a source of religious knowledge are wrapped up in the question of its Divine authority.

(*a*) Whatever the Bible declares on any topic is *absolute and final.* There is no appeal to any other tribunal, and the cause can be carried to no other bar.

(*b*) The declarations of the word of God are *certain.* They are not liable to question or doubt. There is no mistake in its inculcations, no liability to error, no vacillation or uncertainty. As God is true, who is the author of this revelation, His word to men cannot be yea and nay; it must be yea.

(*c*) Their doctrines *are clear to the apprehension of men*, to the extent and for the objects designed. It is a relative clearness indeed, yet one which answers fully its purpose. Just as facts and principles in natural science are clear, so far as they were designed to be made use of practically, so are those of revelation.

(*d*) The instructions of the Bible are also *sufficient.* It is adequate to all the purposes of a system of religion, as it is sufficient for the salvation of men. No other truth is to be sought from other sources by which we are either to anticipate or to supplement these Divine communications.—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 1859.

(3) *The Bible tests the truth of that which is derived from other sources.*

[12178] It may be admitted that the truths which the theologian has to reduce to a science are revealed partly in the external works of God, partly in the constitution of our nature, and partly in the religious experience of believers; yet lest we should err in our inferences from the first, we have a clearer revelation of all that nature reveals in His word; lest we should misinterpret the second, everything that can be legitimately learned from that source will be found, recognized, and authenticated in the Scriptures; and lest we should attribute to the teaching of the Spirit the operations of our natural affections, we find in the Bible the norm and standard of all religious experience.—*C. Hodge, D.D.* (*condensed*).

[12179] While it is certainly true that it was not by Scripture that the Christian truths were delivered to the churches by the apostles, nor are they ordinarily thus learnt in the first instance by any; yet in that sole inspired record, of which the church was the early recipient and constant guardian, it is her belief and affirmation that the whole body of life-giving doctrine is essentially contained; that the Spirit of God has provided that no saving truth should be there wanting. And however some accessory facts may have been left to be proved altogether from minor ecclesiastical sources, yet with matters of doctrine properly so called this has never been the case. Whatever claiming to be an integral part of the faith once delivered to the saints cannot be proved by sure warranty of the Christian Scriptures, is by that circumstance alone convicted of novelty and error.—*W. H. Mill, D.D.*

2 A lower revelation of Divine truth in nature.

[12180] There are two books from whence I collect my divinity; besides that written one of God, another of His servant nature, that universal and public manuscript, that lies expanded unto the eyes of all; those that never saw Him in the one, have discovered Him in the other: this was the scripture and theology of the heathens. . . . Surely the heathens knew better how to join and read these mystical letters than we Christians, who cast a more careless eye on these common hieroglyphics, and disdain to suck divinity from the flowers of nature. Nor do I so forget God as to adore the name of nature; which I define not with the schools, the principle of motion and rest, but that straight and regular line, that settled and constant course the wisdom of God hath ordained for the actions of His creatures, according to their several kinds.—*Sir Thomas Browne.*

3 All the sciences.

[12181] It is often charged against theological dogmatics that there are no sufficient data for such a science, and that the diverse opinions of theologians are a proof of the inadequacy of their method. "No data!" The whole of the sciences are but branches of that great domain, introductions to the high lands where this queen of all the sciences holds her court. All the facts of the natural and the supernatural sphere are the material with which theology deals; all the revelations of God in nature, conscience, history, in literature and art, and pre-eminently the revelations of God to prophetic minds, and in Christ and His kingdom—all the facts of the Divine life in man and in society, in the individual and in the church, constitute the stupendous material of this supreme science. Surely there is room for the loftiest generalization, the most vivid imagination and consummate marshalling of facts.—*British Quarterly Review*, 1877.

III. Its Conditions.

1 Preliminary conditions.

(1) *The existence of God.*

[12182] The first postulate in theology is that God is. Neither natural theology nor scriptural proves the being of God save as appealing to a profound and indestructible instinct of dependence on a Creator, that is as essential to man as his sense of conscious personality. At the outset we must assume that as certainly as anything exists God exists. It is useless to study the science of God if there be no God to know. Of theology, the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews hold good, "He that cometh to it must believe that God is; and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." This is the glorious "petitio principii" that the study of Divine things requires. Here is an *à priori* argument that will endure every test. Without God there can be no theology.—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

(2) *Revelation from God.*

[12183] The second postulate is like unto the first. That God alone can reveal Himself. Though we are not supposed as yet to have the Scriptures lying open before us, we may borrow their language: "As no man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man that is in him, so none knoweth the things of God but the Spirit of God." As theology is *ad Deum*, and *de Deo*, so is it also *a Deo*. Wherever we seek the matter of our science, we must receive it as directly from the finger of God. When we speak of the teaching of nature and the teaching of the Bible, we signify by both alike the teaching of God. Revelation is the removing of a veil from the otherwise unknown, the breaking of a seal on an otherwise closed roll. None can prevail to do this but God.—*Ibid.*

(3) *Human capacity to receive Divine revelation.*

[12184] It is equally a necessary postulate that the Creator has given to man a nature capable of receiving of the knowledge of Himself. There can be no theology, natural or revealed, unless man as the student of it is in the constitution of his mind capable of the study. We speak not now of man's utter degradation in which sin has placed him, nor of man as supernaturally assisted by grace; but of man in the essential elements of his nature. He is endowed with reason, to the elementary laws of which spiritual truth appeals; he has the faculty of faith, which believes in the invisible on the evidence of testimony, and he has a logical understanding capable of discovering inferences from both.—*Ibid.*

2 Conditions as to dogmatic systems.

[12185] The conditions of the scientific knowledge of Christian doctrine are these: (1) Faith is bound to objective Christianity, to its living documentary organ, which belongs to it as to a spiritual life revealing itself independently. This organ is the Word. Christian consciousness is only something subjective and inward, it is a copy. Only objective Christianity is the original. (2) Scientific doctrine is bound not only to the laws of thought, but also to the principles and method of science. Only, while science is conceived in constant progress, faith is, objectively, eternally the same. It might be left to subjective determination which scientific procedure were the best, letting the event decide, viz., that which best composed thinking with faith. But every time has its own attempts at mediation, unsatisfied with those before. This diversity only tends to the so much richer development of the many-sided wisdom of God which, so long as faith stands fast, despises no form entirely, but lets itself down in motherly fashion to our needs and powers. The task for Christian science is to find for its rich contents the form and setting suitable to these. Faith

itself must take its own form as much as its own principles and methods of presentation.—*J. T. Beck, of Tubingen.*

IV. Its Central Truths and Fundamental Principles.

1 In what they consist.

(1) *As regards theology in general.*

[12186] There are three postulates, the being of God, our accountability to Him, and the immortality of the soul, on the certainty of which every other doctrine of religion is assumed to rest.—*J. B. Heard, M.A.*

(2) *As regards Christian theology in particular.*

[12187] As the faith has been delivered once for all to the saints, we have this body of Christian dogmas from the first materially complete, and so in the strictest sense we can have no development of the Christian faith, but only a development of Christian dogmatic. The material of doctrinal fact is a permanent element which has been delivered to us, from which we dare not take, and to which we dare not add. And thus the doctrines of pure dogmatics are all properly fundamental articles; not, indeed, in the sense that they all occupy a position of equal importance in the system, but in the sense that they are all essential to the perfecting of that system, so that the omission of any one would occasion disintegration, and destroy the uniformity and compactness of the whole.—*T. Macpherson, M.A.*

[12188] There is nothing of any value to Christian theology in the world's history, or in philosophic speculation, or in the whole known universe, at all comparable with the one fact which is the foundation of our creed. If Christ be gone, all is gone; there is no basis to build upon; there is no system to build. Mosaism goes too, and we are left to Zoroaster, to Plato, to Confucius, to Buddha; nay, all goes, for in religious investigation our faculties are proved utterly untrustworthy and utterly worthless, and universal scepticism must end the strife and close the dreary scene.—*British Quarterly Review*, 1879.

[12189] Christ being the Truth (John xiv. 6), its subject-matter, its best interpreter and witness (John vi. 68; 1 Tim. vi. 13; Rev. i. 5), and the ruler of the religious domain in its widest sense (John xviii. 37), must be the Fountain-head for the investigation of Christian dogmatics. The science is from its nature Christo-centric. This claim, however, does not denote that Christology must be treated first of all; on the contrary, there are preponderating difficulties in this method; but that everything that dogmatics has to teach concerning God, man, the way of salvation, &c., must be viewed in the light which streams from Christ as the centre, and nothing in regard to these doctrines can be acknowledged as truth that is in irreconcilable contradiction with the word and spirit of Christ, the King of truth. This proceeds from His exalted character, and is also contained in the apostolic statement in Col. ii. 3.—*Van Oosterzee (condensed).*

2 Their necessity to theology and religion alike.

[12190] There are in systems of belief, no less than in systems of life, certain parts more intimate and essential, as conditions of vitality, than others. Whilst these are safe, other portions may pretty much be left to themselves; and if these are endangered, no care can long preserve what remains. In theology, it will not be denied that there are such conditions of the integrity, life, and worth of the whole. Call these parts of the system "fundamental," "essentials of Christianity," or what you will, such essentials there must be, and that not by factitious preference, determining that such should be essential, but by the simple law of relations, of truth to truth. If one position cannot be an antecedent and consequent to another and the same—if some propositions must be shown true, before others can be entertained—evidently the earlier ones are not fundamental by chance, but logically, and in the nature of things. Such would be our brief appeal to those who decry systems, and the insisting on certain doctrines as fundamental. If truths are related, and their dependence can be discerned and exhibited, this exhibition must be a system, however broken and incomplete at certain points: and the relation of some few to the remaining ones must be displayed as fundamental. Such truths are not a co-ordinate series—not fragments scattered on the same level—they are a building, and portions constitute the foundation—or, to recur to our former allusion, are vital organs of the whole. Yet the tendency of the times is to obliterate such distinctions; and the charge is promptly made of being unphilosophic, illiberal, &c., if there be any stand taken on certain truths as essential to Christianity. Surely there must be a limit somewhere, within which Christianity must be defined, and beyond which it is sacrificed and renounced. There may be an undue narrowing or enlargement of the circle, both as regards the recognition of opinions and of persons. Some might be disposed to assert that all the peculiarities of the Calvinistic, and some that all those of the Arminian, representations of doctrine, are essential. Whether they are so or not is a point which the believer must examine and settle for himself; but every inquirer may be expected to acquiesce in this statement as axiomatic, and as directive to his investigations, that such points must be essential, and perhaps such alone, whose truth, or the contrary, must determine the affirmation to be given respecting all the rest. Nor will those of most enlarged indulgence, as regards the varieties of human judgment, deny that the throwing into matters of open question, successively, all the principal doctrines of revelation, would be a renuncia-

tion of Christian truth, whatever positive form opinions might take without that circle. There must be some truths essential; and there is a point somewhere on which the most liberal takes his position sternly, and refuses the pledges of a community of faith with those who proceed further. Every Christian must repose on some great truths, without which he would feel the grand purpose of revelation was subverted, and his own hope for eternity destroyed.—*British Quarterly Review*, 1850.

3 Their facile determination.

[12191] We firmly believe—and the most cursory inspection of very diverse "systems" of theology confirms the fact—that where the Scriptures are received in their integrity, where a considerable portion of them is not sponged out by a preliminary process of criticism, there is little difficulty in determining what are the cardinal articles of such a theology. These stand out, clear and luminous, from a fair induction of passages, whatever difficulty and obscurity may attend less important articles; and nothing avails to dim them but the breaking of the lamp in which they shine. We firmly believe in the proposition, that points are revealed in Scripture with a clearness proportioned to their importance, and that the most momentous can hardly be missed. The great majority of systems, however they may differ in minor points, and however they may differ even in the complete theory of those in which they agree—however defective they may seem in the eyes of some, and however encumbered with unauthorized additions in the eyes of others—incontrovertibly maintain the great central facts (as we deem them) that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself;" that in Him we have the brightest mirror of the Divine perfections; that He came to make known to us the Father in revelations "full of grace and truth," that He voluntarily offered Himself as a "sacrifice" and "propitiation for the sins of the world," and that the benefits of this stupendous intervention may be obtained by repentance, faith, and obedience. These, together with the personality of the Divine Spirit and His gracious offices, absolutely necessary for guiding us into "every good word and work," but freely offered to those who will accept them, and exerted in harmony with the laws of our moral nature, are the truths which make the gospel what it is, "glad tidings" to a creature full of guilt and sin, and therefore of fear and sorrow, truths which, if they be retained in the New Testament, leave the essence of the gospel still there luminous on its page, though subordinate truths may be mutilated or misunderstood; and which, if they be taken away, leave it a riddle-book of incoherencies, in which language seems to be employed, not to convey thought, but to conceal it, and which must be systematically mistranslated before it can be understood! —*British Quarterly Review*, 1866.

4 Their stability amidst corruption and sectarian controversy.

[12192] Whatever may have been the motives and conduct of professional theologians from age to age, whatever may have been the speculations of false philosophy on the facts of Christianity, those facts themselves are not touched. They form part of the great history of mankind; they account for the present condition of things in the world; and we cannot deny them without involving ourselves in universal scepticism. There can be no rational doubt that man is in a degraded, disadvantageous condition, that Jesus Christ came into the world, in the mercy of God, to produce a restoration of man—that He brought life and immortality to light by His coming—that he died on the cross for our sins and rose again for our justification—that the Holy Ghost came by His promise to abide with His church, miraculously assisting the apostles in the first institution of it, and ever since that period interceding with the hearts of believers. These, and other truths connected with them, are not collected from texts or sentences of Scripture: they are part of its records. Infinite theories may be raised upon them; but these theories, whether true or false, leave the facts where they were. There is enough in them to warm and comfort the heart, though we had assurance of nothing more.—*Bp. Hampden, Bampton Lectures (condensed)*, 1852.

V. Rise of its Dogmas.

1 Due to the healthy action of the church in resisting the corruption of unformulated doctrine.

[12193] The church's detailed articulations of doctrine have ordinarily been the result of a natural effort, on the part of life or health—"soundness"—for the expulsion of some alien element of untruth—which is unsoundness—that has invaded her from without or from within, and threatened her life or health in the truth. Observe in the Pastoral Epistles how often the changes are rung upon the idea of "soundness" or health, prosperous life, in connection with doctrine or truth express. The effort—it may be the instinctive effort—of life to express truth in order to expulsion of untruth which breeds disease and death, is what has ordinarily occasioned the articulation of detailed doctrines by the churches. And that effort, once made on a grand scale on critical occasions in the history of Christian thought by the church as a whole, not only has left a clear gain of ability and attainment for the whole church of following times, but in detail is being continually repeated in substance by her individual members from generation to generation. They thus, perhaps unconsciously, resume the past, the process as well as the result.—*Prof. J. Macgregor, D.D.*

[12194] The scientific action of the church in formulating her doctrine, was materially promoted by the early appearance of heresies.

Each, as it grew to a head, called forth in opposition all the resources of argument, from whatever quarter, which the church could summon to her aid; and no Christian truth emerged from the conflict the same in its mode of expression, and in its established connection with other truths, it descended into the arena.—*E. A. Litton, M.A.*

[12195] Many things were latent in the Scriptures; and when heretics were cut off, they agitated the church of God with questions. The latent things were opened, and the will of God was understood. Many, therefore, who were excellently qualified for discerning and handling the Scriptures were latent in the people of God, and did not assist the solution of difficult questions when no calumniator threatened. For, was the subject of the Trinity perfectly treated before the barking of the Arians? Was the subject of repentance perfectly treated before the opposition of the Novalians? So neither was the subject of baptism perfectly treated before the contradiction of the rebaptizers, who were put out. Nor concerning the very unity of Christ were the statements exactly drawn out until after that the separation began to annoy the weak brethren. So that those who had the skill to treat and resolve these points, to prevent the perishing of the weak thus solicited by the questions of the impious, drew forth and made public, by discourses and dissertations, the hidden things of the law.—*St. Augustine.*

2 Due to the requirements of the church as a living body.

[12196] Christian "doctrine" may have been very simple at its first stage; it was indeed the mere acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord and Saviour (though men often forget what that seemingly simple acknowledgment involved), but he who with further light granted to him refuses to make necessary inferences—he who, among those to whom the records of the Bible and of church history are open, despises doctrines which have been educed from facts, doctrines sifted by experience, tested by time, corrected by controversy, cleared by use—is as wrong and foolish as a man of mature age would be who should try to treat himself as an infant again; or as a modern philosopher who should despise and ignore all developments and discoveries in science of later days, and affirm that a philosophic spirit was a satisfactory substitute for the actual results of science.—*W. Saumerez Smith, M.A.*

3 Due to the requirements of the church as a teaching institution.

[12197] Now when Christian believers found themselves in the new world which had been made for them by their faith in Christ, and were treasuring the memory of His words, and pondering the glory of His self-sacrificing love, and counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord; when, in obedience to His word, they baptized disciples in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, they were compelled to connote by all these terms certain ideas. But what ideas? They tried continually to summarize their faith, even though they might fail to harmonize all that they knew. They brought into general statements the grand facts of the Divine nature, the various manifestations of the Divine will and the human will, in both the natural and supernatural order of things. It became necessary to them that the shadows should be compared with the substance, and the facts with each other.—*British Quarterly Review*, 1877.

VI. Leading Characteristics of Christian Theology.

1 It is Christo-centric.

[12198] Christ is its central sun; its pervading element; the stem from which everything in dogma, in precept, in religious experience, radiates, and towards which everything returns. Not as a mere anatomy does Christ dwell here—the crown of a speculative organism, symmetrical and complete, but without flesh and blood and vitality. Rather is He the living soul that animates, and guides, and hallows the whole.—*H. A. Boardman, D.D.*

2 It is mysterious.

[12199] In Christian theology mystery is everywhere: its simplest elements are unsearchable by the faculties of man. This is to some extent true of all other sciences; they all have their mysteries in both the scriptural senses of the term: things brought to light that have been long hidden, and things unsearchable, the signs of which only are seen. The latter always waits on the former; when the mystery ceases to be a matter reserved from knowledge, it ceases to be a matter reserved from reason. The simplest elements of every department of knowledge are things unsearchable by human faculties. Supposing scientific research to be successful in penetrating every secret of nature, so far as to find the secondary cause of every effect, there is still a large residuum over which it broods waiting for light which probably will never come. But the theological mystery is "confessedly great." Every doctrine, however bright and blessed in itself, is compassed about with thick darkness; every page, every line of its record "exit in mysterium." There are and ever will be great antitheses, or, as men call them, contradictions in thought, which our limited capacity is unable to reconcile. Metaphysical thinking is compelled to leave these antinomies unsolved wherever the finite and the infinite meet. Our science has also its speculative region, into which reason soars, but the logical understanding cannot follow. Moreover, and finally, it has revelations to deal with which appal the minds which they baffle: the dread and awful truths which are its dark side, having

their reflections in human experience and the ordinary course of nature, but not the less a stumbling-block on that account. All these are the cross of theology, which to itself is its glory, to unbelieving man its reproach.—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

3 It is reasonable.

[12200] Every man who reads the Bible is compelled to draw for himself some conclusions as to the teaching which he derives from its study as a whole; and individual Christians believe that in gathering this general idea they are guided by the indwelling and illuminating Spirit promised to true believers. But if individual Christians perform this process for themselves, and look confidently for the help of the Holy Spirit to prevent them from falling into error in performing it, how unreasonable would it be to deny a similar right and power to the whole church, which is formed of all individual Christians, and which has the special privilege of being in its corporate capacity the habitation of the Holy Ghost.—*F. Meyrick, M.A.*

4 It is certain.

[12201] Dogmatics, as the science of faith, has its own peculiar degree of certainty. Its subject-matter cannot be demonstrated as a palpable fact, or as a mathematical proposition. We must be contented here with internal evidence, obtained, not by the method of demonstration, but by that of proof and assertion. This certainty, however, is not less in degree here than elsewhere, but rather of a different kind. I may be as firmly convinced of what I believe as of what I know; but I am so in a different manner, and generally on different grounds. It is therefore not correct to contrast the certainty of knowledge with the probability of faith. The believer has more than probability; he is as certain of what he believes as he is of his own existence. And yet this certainty cannot always show itself, because it is a certainty of faith. Exact science is a knowledge of the intellect, which may be imparted to every man of sound mind. Faith is the confidence of the heart which we can only affirm and justify for those in whom the moral condition for the recognition of the truth is to be found.—*Van Oosterzee* (*condensed*).

5 It is sufficient.

[12202] All our religious knowledge whatever is included within the circle of the faith "once delivered to the saints." Not one solitary religious truth is consequently known to have been discovered by religious intuition. It is not simply that the doctrines held by the church lie within the circle of inspiration; but that none are found outside the circle which are recognized as truths by those who do not belong to the church. Let the church, with her faith in a revelation, be placed on one side, and rationalism, with its assertion of man's self-sufficient capacity, upon the other. It is quite conceivable that the rationalist might accept certain religious truths, or religious sentiments, which the church, on the ground that they have not the sanction of revelation, disavows. In this case rationalism would have a religious creed of its own beyond and in addition to the creed of the church. But when the facts are examined this is found not to be the case. Rationalism has neither any distinct religious truth, nor any distinct religious sentiment. All that rationalism holds the faith includes. Up to a certain point the two advance together, and then the distinctive province of rationalism is marked out solely by denial, not affirmation; destruction, not construction.

It must be remembered also that the teaching of the church is a logical whole, so coherent and complete that the rationalistic denial dislocates and disjoints the truth falling within the rationalistic acceptance. The common truths accepted by both are as incoherent without the special truths rejected by rationalism, as the backbone of an extinct plesiosaurus would be incoherent without the head and legs of the animal. In every case, without exception, the creed of rationalism is included within the creed of Christianity. Take away from the former all that is possessed by it in common with the faith, and you take away everything. Literally nothing remains beyond the asserted power of intuitive discovery. And the power of discovery, which has never discovered anything, is left in its own vanity and emptiness, *vox et præterea nihil.*—*E. Garbett, M.A.*

6 It is practical.

[12203] The faith meets every part of man. To supply his practical wants, to alleviate his sorrows, to remedy his ruin, to throw light upon his darkness, and make even the valley of Baca a threshold into glory, is its one all-pervading object. It does not soar heartlessly above us, like some bright angel of another world, torturing our human hearts by the vision of a serenity beyond our reach. But it comes like an archangel on an errand of mercy, and walks to and fro our world, a ministering spirit of light and joy. It does not disdain the earthly soil and earthly atmosphere, but imitates the Son of God Incarnate, as He brightened our earth with His smiles and consecrated it with His tears. The faith is in every part of it intensely practical. Doctrines are but the statement of God's mode of saving us. Even the subtle refinements of the Athanasian creed are practical, for they are directed to preserve from heretical refinement the plain and blessed truth of the nature and office of our Saviour. Its loftiest heights of truth are like the mountain ranges, nursing parents of the rivers that water the lovely vales beneath, and fill them with felicity and joy. The faith reflects the perfections of its Author, as, like a cloudless sun, He fills the spiritual firmament with life and immortality.—*Ibid.*

7 It is universal in its adaptability.

[12204] Within the compass of the same faith is milk for babes and strong meat for men—plain truths, simple enough for the loving comprehension of a child, and mysteries high and deep enough to overtask the powers of an archangel. But the two cannot be sharply separated from each other. The man in his strong grasp of the broad truths of saving love, exercises the humility of the child; and the child in the majesty of the revelation, rises into the maturity of the man.—*Ibid.*

8 It is finite.

(1) *Because of the infinitude of truth.*

[12205] The truth, like God, is infinite; the best theology which man can construct must be, like man himself, finite.—*A. Macleod, D.D.*

(2) *Because of the finitude of faith.*

[12206] Just as faith here is always imperfect, so the science of faith must always be partial too (1 Cor. xiii. 9–12). This is in a certain degree the cross of theology, but also its crown, since a recognition of its limits tells of self-knowledge, promotes humility, and inclines to greater caution. This is specially evident when we compare the confessions of the most celebrated theologians with those of the heroes of absolute knowledge. Least of all in our times will dogmatics spring at once full-grown from the head and heart of its priest, as Minerva from the skull of Jupiter.—*Van Oosterzee* (*condensed*).

9 It is provisional.

[12207] We need to remember, indeed, that science is only a provisional reading of the facts of nature; that the scientific interpretation of the universe differs in every age, changing with the changing time, taking new and larger forms as the years pass: that even since the beginning of the present century it has had at least three shibboleths—Convulsion, Continuity, and Evolution—and has stoutly declared it necessary to our scientific salvation that we should pronounce each of them in turn. And, in like manner, we need to remember that theology is but a provisional reading of the facts of religion; that it is but a human, imperfect, and ever-varying interpretation of the contents of Scripture, and changes its forms and terms at least as rapidly as science itself. The commonest phrases of our divinity schools—such as "documentary hypothesis," "Elohistic and Jehovistic scriptures"—were unknown to our fathers. The great facts of religion and revelation remain the same, indeed, through all ages and changes, as do the great facts of nature. But our interpretations of these facts vary, our theories about them change; they grow larger and more complete as men grow wiser. God does not change, nor do His relations to men: but our conceptions of Him and of our relations to Him are very different from those of the early fathers of the church; just as our conceptions of the universe are a great advance upon those which were held before Galileo arose and Kepler and Newton.—*British Quarterly Review*, 1874.

VII. Characteristics of Its Doctrine.

1 Its negative aspect.

(1) *It is not an addition to the original facts.*

[12208] All Divine truth is, according to the doctrine of the Protestant churches, recorded in certain books. It is equally open to all who, in any age, can read those books; nor can all the discoveries of all the philosophers in the world add a single verse to any of those books. A Christian of the fifth century with a Bible is neither better nor worse situated than a Christian of the nineteenth century with a Bible, candour and natural acuteness being, of course, supposed equal. It matters not at all that the compass, printing, gunpowder, steam, gas, vaccination, and a thousand other discoveries and inventions which were unknown in the fifth century are familiar to the nineteenth. None of these discoveries and inventions has the smallest bearing on religious questions.—*Lord Macaulay.*

[12209] The growth of Christian theology no more means the adding of fresh verses to the Bible than the progress of astronomy means the adding of fresh stars to the heavens. The completeness of nature does not imply the completeness of our knowledge of nature. So, too, in regard to the Bible and to Christ. Independently of us, they have an existence of their own. Our knowledge of them may, however, be continually advancing.—*Percy Strutt, M.A.*

(2) *It is not a revolution in the domain of accepted Christian doctrine.*

[12210] The distinction between evolution and revolution must by no means be passed by when the question is asked, How far must this progress extend? We must here look for amplification, and not for alteration. It occurs wherever that which is virtually contained in principle in the word of truth is brought gradually to light, just as it is in the growth of a child, who does not get any new limbs, but sees those which it already has slowly increase and strengthen. We see development in the opening bud, which opens according to its nature; it would be degeneration if the rose-bush were to become gradually a thorn. Progress supposes that we remain in the path in which we have hitherto been, not that we all at once choose an opposite one. Thus dogmatics is conservative as to its principles, progressive as to their development.—*Van Oosterzee.*

(3) *It is not a compromise with the spirit of the age.*

[12211] There can be no progress in theology made by entering into compromises with the spirit of the age, or by adjusting the doctrines of the Bible, so as to render them harmonious with current modes of thinking.—*Wm. White.*

2 Its positive aspect.

(1) *It is a progressive clearness of apprehension.*

[12212] The revelation which is complete, as it comes from God, may be progressive, as it is apprehended by us. Who will say there has been no advance in the principles of sacred hermeneutics since the time of the Greek and Latin fathers? or that, with all the light which modern travellers have thrown upon the topography and natural history of the East, the language of the Bible is no better understood now than it was three centuries ago? Has no gain, in consistency and clearness, accrued to our religious philosophy from a more assiduous cultivation, in our day, of mental and moral science? And are there not many forms of difficulty and cavil in relation to Christianity, which, though occasioning much perplexity to the thoughtful mind in past ages, have been so cleared up by our more ripened criticism and scholarship, that the boldest adversary of the faith would not dare to urge them now? Willingly, therefore, and with strong confidence, let the religious teacher go hand in hand with all literary and scientific progress. Let him not fear to mould his theological teaching upon the advanced knowledge of the times, and in harmony with it.—*D. Moore.*

(2) *It is a progressive accuracy of definition.*

[12213] We welcome it as progress when the chief subject matter of theology is described with increasing accuracy. Our business is with a dogmatics freed from the dust but not from the learning of the schools; from the thorns but not from the sharp definitions of the old systems; a scientific exposition of faith, according to the golden word of Da Costa, "in its essence the fruit of ages; in outward form of these our days."—*Van Oosterzee* (*condensed*).

(3) *It is a progressive power of self-vindication.*

[12214] That which is thus more accurately defined ought also to be continually better vindicated. Dogmatics advances where it looks more closely into the nature of its so-called proofs, which it not only counts but also weighs; while, though paying special heed to the historical, never loses sight of the psychological mode of argument. Moreover it must always ally itself more frankly with each element of truth which it finds even beyond its own proper bounds, and apply the "all things are yours" without any fixed limits.—*Ibid.*

(4) *It is a progressive adaptability and adaptation.*

[12215] The more science is applied in various ways, the better it fulfils its duty. The light which rises on her domains must also cast its beams on the surrounding country. True theology will the more approach its ideal as it more fully contributes to the solution of the various questions of the day, and to the healing of the reigning diseases, by setting forth and maintaining the eternal truth. So far each period requires its own elaboration of the doctrine of faith, and no single method can be said to be constantly adequate to the changing wants of different centuries.—*Ibid.*

VIII. Its General Leading Departments.

1 Natural and revealed theology.

[12216] As the Bible contains one class of facts or truths which are not elsewhere revealed, and another class which are to some extent revealed in nature so as to be deducible therefrom, theology is properly distinguished into natural and revealed; the former dealing with the facts of nature, the other with those of Scripture.—*Dr. C. Hodge.*

2 Apologetic and dogmatic theology.

[12217] The scientific method followed in systematic theology is partly apologetic and partly dogmatic, in the stricter sense. As apologetic it confirms and justifies Christian truth by the negation and overthrow of what is either non-Christian or un-Christian; as dogmatical, it investigates and exhibits Christian truth in its inner and essential richness. The distinction between the apologetic and the dogmatic, in the stricter sense, is merely relative; for as, on the one hand, error and pretence can only be thoroughly laid bare in the light of a positive knowledge of truth; so, on the other hand, the full power of the truth is first revealed when it vanquishes contradiction.—*Ep. Martensen.*

IX. Its Special Leading Departments.

1 Biblical.

(1) *Its range.*

[12218] Biblical theology, in its widest meaning, includes the criticism and study of the text of Scripture; its construction as a whole; the laws of exegesis and their application, or hermeneutics; its archæology, geography, and history; and all that belongs to the introduction to the Bible. These restricted in meaning, it is the arrangement of the theology of Scripture in its own terms and according to its own laws of development and classification. In this sense it is the foundation of all theology properly so called, every doctrine having its own and proper biblical development.—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

(2) *Its practical character.*

[12219] Strictly to speak, in the Bible there are no doctrines. What we read there is matter of fact: either fact nakedly set forth as it occurred, or fact explained and elucidated by the light of inspiration cast upon it. It will be thought, perhaps, that the apostolic Epistles are an exception to this observation. But even these, if accurately considered, will not be found an exception. No one, perhaps, will maintain that there is any new truth of Christianity set

forth in the Epistles; any truth, that is, which does not presuppose the whole truth of human salvation by Jesus Christ as already determined and complete. The Epistles clearly imply that the work of salvation is done. They repeat and insist on its most striking parts; urging chiefly on man what remains for him to do, now that Christ has done all that God purposed in behalf of man, before the foundation of the world.—*Bp. Hampden.*

(3) *Its method.*

[12220] All through the process of revelation we see efforts made in the direction of a dogmatic statement of belief. Thus, when Moses said, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord," he gathered together a whole cycle of assurances in a dogmatic form of priceless value; and when our Lord, after quoting the two great commandments, declared that on these two commandments hung all the law and the prophets, He did not abrogate either law or prophets, but uttered an inductive generalization of both: He compressed their teaching into a proposition capable of verification. Of the same character are very numerous sayings of the apostles Paul and John, teachers who threw into burning sentences principles which are the interpretation of the old and new covenants, from which these covenants may be conceived to have been developed, and which, being taken for granted, all the rest would follow. The dawn of dogma may be found in the New Testament. "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God"—the sentence with which St. Mark prefaces his narrative of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, is a compendious statement of the deep reality which finds exposition in the whole of the sacred biography. The opening verses of St. John's prologue to his gospel are equally descriptive of the entire intellectual presupposition which enabled the beloved disciple to understand the mystery of the life which had been enacted under his eyes.—*British Quarterly Review*, 1877.

[12221] The leading, determining facts of revelation have been "arranged and systematized" for us by the Author of the revelation Himself. These determining facts, divinely given, have been divinely arranged and systematized. The Scriptures not only inform us of the fact that there is an economy of redemption, but they give us an outline of this economy, and give it so fully that we are left without excuse if we do not apprehend it. Let one instance suffice. In Romans iii. 20–31, we have the following elements of this economy specified and stated in their correlation:—(1) That justification by the works of the law is impossible. (2) That the righteousness which the law demands, as the condition of our justification, has been provided by God Himself, and revealed by the law and the prophets. (3) That this righteousness is available, through faith in Jesus Christ, for the Gentile as well as for the Jew. (4) That it is a righteousness which God has provided through the propitiatory death of His Son. (5) That He was moved to provide and bestow it simply by His own free will and good pleasure. (6) That this righteousness, thus provided, was necessary to justify God in justifying men, whether under the Old Testament or the New.—*Prof. Watts.*

(4) *Its value and importance.*

[12222] There is one department of knowledge which, like an ample palace, contains within itself mansions for every other knowledge: which deepens and extends the interest of every other, gives it new charms and additional purpose; the study of which, rightly and liberally pursued, is beyond any other entertaining, beyond all others tends at once to tranquillize and enliven, to keep the mind elevated and steadfast, the heart humble and tender: it is biblical theology—the philosophy of religion, the religion of philosophy.—*S. T. Coleridge.*

2 Natural.

(1) *Its meaning.*

[12223] The term natural theology may have two meanings. It may be called natural because it is founded on truth inherent in the nature of things, or because it is ascertained by the natural capacities of men. Nothing exhaustive can ever be known of it in the former sense; natural theology can never, therefore, be infallible.—*Joseph Cook.*

[12224] As concerning Divine philosophy, or natural theology, it is that knowledge, or rather those sparks of knowledge, concerning God, which may be obtained by the contemplation of His creatures; which knowledge may be truly termed Divine in respect of the object, and natural in respect of the light.—*Lord Bacon.*

(2) *Its scriptural arguments.*

[12225] The Scriptures clearly recognize the fact that the works of God reveal His being and attributes. This they do not only by frequent reference to the works of nature as manifestations of the Divine perfections, but by direct assertions: Psa. xix. 1–4. The sacred writers in contending with the heathen appeal to this evidence: Psa. xciv. 8–10; Acts xiv. 15–17; xvii. 24–29. Not only the fact of this revelation, but its clearness is distinctly asserted: Rom. i. 19–21. It cannot, therefore, be doubted that not only the being of God, but also His eternal power and Godhead are so revealed in His works as to lay a stable foundation for natural theology.—*C. Hodge, D.D.* (*condensed*).

(3) *Its materials and findings.*

[12226] Whatever may be thought on this subject, none will doubt that man is visibly this world's highest fact. In him, therefore, and by correlating him with the world he inhabits, we shall find its most certain explanation. Linked in a thousand ways to the world, yet differing manifestly from it—in the world, yet not truly of the world—man is (so to speak) the great supernatural element discoverable in nature. In this spirit Job turns his human eye upon the starry heavens, and infers from their glory and

beauty the invisible things of God. In this same spirit the Preacher examines human nature itself, and concludes, "Fear God and keep His commandments : for this is the whole of man." St. Paul unites both preacher and patriarch. He maintains that what may be known of God is manifest both in and unto mankind. His invisible things are shown us visibly. We may ourselves feel after and find the Lord. Such, then, is the utterance of natural theology, and upon such grounds it speaks. Natural religion, as strictly defined and distinguished from natural theology, does not need to ask the previous question, "Is there, indeed, a God?" In reasoning out its principles, we may proceed along very separate paths. One is to assume the conclusions of natural theology, and argue from them to the relations which they determine, the duties they impose, and the feelings they excite, when man is viewed as standing in the presence of his God. This is the easiest way of conducting the discussion ; but it is not to all minds a method the most satisfactory. Another path sets out from the truth of moral distinctions, and leads to the establishment and definition of the doctrine of retributive justice, as well as of the law of its ultimate development. You will not fail to observe that, if the truth of retribution be thus established, natural theology gains a fresh and confirmatory evidence. On the whole it appears advisable to adopt a line of reasoning which unites in itself the advantages of the two paths just indicated. It will be my endeavour to rest the conclusions of natural religion—and above all, its main and most essential doctrine—upon the truths of pure morality. But from time to time, and at various landing-places of the argument, it will be wise to compare them with the positions which a theist must needs occupy in regard of the questions at issue.—*W. Jackson, M.A.*

[12227] Let us suppose man studying his own constitution, as being one in self-conscious personality, but composed of body and soul, what of theology can he learn from self? or, rather, what facts in his external nature and economy lead him upward to God and Divine things. (1) *The fact of his very existence*, so "fearfully and wonderfully made," is a perpetual remembrance of a Creator, infinite in power and wisdom. Man knows that he is ; that time was when he did not exist ; and as his reason tells him every being must have been a cause, he cannot think for a moment upon the fact of his own existence without having the grand conception of a Creator and a God. (2) *The constitution of his nature*, as presided over by conscience, gives him assurance that he is a spiritual personality, under a moral government, responsible for his action, probably to incur the consequences of that responsibility throughout eternity. Scripture itself tells us that it needs no external revelation to convince man that his conscience is the vicegerent of a Divine authority. It speaks of a God, of a moral nature, of right and wrong, of approval and condemnation. Following out this theme, it will be obvious how much of Divine truth man's nature, even its corrupted and degraded state, avails to teach him. (3) *The traces of the lost image of God* left in his nature are to man an assurance that he is not utterly lost, and give ground of expectation and hope that he is under a remedial economy yet to be revealed. Though it is only through the influence of the Divine Spirit, exhibiting to the soul the requirements of the law and inspiring conviction and sorrow, that a true repentance and a true desire after holiness can be wrought, yet man is not naturally without a certain consciousness of loss and desire for restoration. There is a secret voice in the depth of his nature that cries out for a deliverer "O wretched man that I am!" is but the intense cry of human nature everywhere.—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

[12228] (1) The being, wisdom, power, and unity of God are taught by *the phenomena and arrangements of the material world;* which demands a supreme and omnipotent cause of its existence ; which in the unity of its vast design, as witnessed by the adjustment of ten thousand subordinate causes and effects to one controlling purpose, asserts that God is one ; which displays His infinite wisdom in endless contrivances of what among men would be termed skill ; and which has in all ages, and among all nations, led the minds of men by the very first law of human reason, to behold in nature a "manifestation of the eternal power and Godhead" of the Creator. (2) *The combination of the elements of love and of wrath*, of peace and of war, of order and of disturbance, the brighter and the darker phenomena of nature, indicating the presence everywhere of infinite kindness and of infinite displeasure, attests and has to man's calm meditation always attested the fact of some interference with the will of God. The Scripture explains the dread mystery ; but nature everywhere eloquently proclaims the fact. The universe proclaims the unity of God. Reason rejects the idea of two independent co-eternal powers contending in the economy of things. There must, therefore, be some tremendous reason why the world, as fitted for the abode of happy beings, should be so full of the elements of disorder and wretchedness to even its noblest tenant. Beyond this the teaching of nature cannot go.—*Ibid.*

[12229] We suppose the Bible yet unopened ; not yet given ; and place ourselves in the condition of those thoughtful men whom nature taught to believe in God, but as a God displeased with His creatures. What did history teach them further? (1) *That there was some wonderful reason for the forbearance of God.* On the one hand, God left them "not without witness" of His goodness, "filling men's mouths with food and gladness." On the other, He evidently winked at human iniquity, punishing and yet sparing the malefactor. Natural theology might infer and did speculate as to the great secret of the Divine Mercy. (2) It taught them that *the irregularities of this world would probably*

be repaired in another. The reason of man bore witness that while nations were often punished in this world, retributive justice seldom dealt rigorously with the individual ; hence the silent but profound expectation of all the devout that perchance a day of eternal adjustment would come.—*Ibid.*

3 Systematic.

[12230] We may liken systematic theology to a mighty temple which it has taken ages to complete. We anticipate the time when the work shall be accomplished, and the structure shall rise in its finished glory. It will then appear that the materials were not created by the workmen who have wrought upon it, but drawn from the quarries and mines in which God first placed them. The work of men has been to find their pre-destined harmony, and then adjust them. At the completion of the structure it will be found that some have deposited and arranged the firm foundation stones ; others have carried up the work tier upon tier ; others have raised the towers and spires ; some have finished and adorned the various apartments ; some have removed the rubbish which error, negligence, and indolence had suffered to accumulate from time to time ; some have been content to encourage the hearts of the workmen against the scoffing Sanballats of one age or another, or to forge and sharpen the implements with which the work has been wrought. But when the whole shall be completed, the design will be seen to be only to magnify and to set forth in clearer lustre, and in varied forms, the exhaustless riches of that Divine truth from which all was constructed.—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 1859.

4 Historical.

(1) *Its different conceptions.*

[12231] 1. *By Evangelical Christians.* The history of doctrine is a history of the efforts made by theologians and religious denominations (1) to develop and shape the substance of the Christian faith into doctrinal statements ; (2) to restore and defend the theology of the Bible. 2. *By Roman Catholics and many Anglicans.* The history of doctrine is a scientific statement of the manner in which the several doctrines of the Church have been discussed, developed, and, at last, authoritatively defined. 3. *By Rationalists.* The history of doctrine is nothing but a history of the doctrinal controversies in the Christian denominations.—*McClintock and Strong, Encyclopædia.*

(2) *Its true aim, scope, and method.*

[12232] It should be the object of a history of doctrines to give in the truest possible manner the order in which Divine truth has been unfolded in the history of the church. It must trace down the whole course of doctrinal discussion, give the leading characteristics of each epoch, as distinguished from all others, and at last show just where the world now stands in the discussion of the problems which Christianity has presented to it. It should be a faithful mirror to the whole doctrinal history of the church. It must interpret each writer according to the sense of the age in which he lived, and not bring in subsequent views and modern notions to explain the meaning which an ancient writer gave to a phrase or dogma. It must show what are the points of difference in the reiterated controversies about the same doctrine. It must carefully distinguish the theological and systematic spirit of the different ages of the church, and not force a subsequent development upon an antecedent æra. It must bring out into clear relief the influential personages of each age, and, in exhibiting their systems, distinguish between the peculiar notions of the individual and the general spirit of his times. It must show how controversies about one series of doctrines have modified the views held respecting other doctrines ; how each doctrine has acquired a new aspect, according to its position in the mind or system of an author, or in its relation to the leading controversies of the age. It must show when a dogma was held strictly and when loosely ; when disconnected from a system and when embraced in a system. It must carefully guard against the error of supposing that when a doctrine was not carefully discussed by the inquisitive and discriminating intellect, it was not really cherished as a matter of faith. This is an error into which many have fallen. But we might as well suppose that men did not believe they had understanding until they discussed the operations of this faculty, or did in its turn, if indeed the latter be not the point of view which should have the precedency. Such a history must finally present before our eyes a picture of a real historical process just as it has been going on, and the more faithful it is to all the leading facts of the case, the more philosophical and complete will it be as a history. By such an exhibition, the whole doctrinal progress of the Christian Church being set before our eyes, we shall, in comparing its results with our own systems, be able to see wherein we are defective, one-sided, and partial ; wherein our systems need to be reformed, filled up, or chastened ; how they may be animated by a new life, and gather better nurture ; not trust to their senses until they invented a theory of sensation. Such a history must show the influence which councils, confessions, and systems have had upon their respective eras ; how preceding times led to such expositions of the faith, and subsequent times were affected by them. It must exhibit clearly the ruling ideas, the shaping notions in each system, and how each predominant idea has modified the component parts of the whole system. It will not neglect to notice the influence which national habits and modes of thought, which great civil and political changes, which the different philosophical schools have had upon the formation of dogmas ; nor, on the other hand, will it fail to notice how the Christian faith has itself acted upon and influenced these, and by comparing

the results with the Scripture, we shall be able to see what parts of its sacred truths have been least discussed, what problems yet remain to be solved, what is still to be done in order that our Divine system of faith be wholly reproduced in the life of the church, in order that all its truth and doctrines stand out as distinctly and majestically in the history of the race as they do in that revelation which was given to control and determine this history.—*Dr. H. B. Smith.*

(3) *Church doctrine traced to its source by way of identifying the true faith.*

[12233] Let the whole body of dogmatic truth, as taught in the visible church of Christ, whether it be true or whether it be false, be considered together. Whatever we may think of the doctrine, let us view the whole as one stream ; then let us trace it backward to its fountain-head, and see what happens. The process is the same as tracing a river to its source. We wish to know whence it derives its waters ; we therefore trace it carefully up the stream, and note where every branch separates, to the right hand or to the left. No stream that falls in along the course can form any part of the original waters ; we therefore let it alone, and steadily pursue the central current, till we reach the spot where it flows out of the broad lake or the precipitous mountain's side. Let us do the same thing with the dogmatic teaching of the church ; we shall then see which branch traces its original furthest back and forms part of the parent stream.

We scarcely commence the process before two doctrines are separated from the mass and fall behind us. The dogmas of the infallibility of the pope, and of the immaculate conception of the Virgin, reach no further back than our own memories. The dogma of purgatorial flames branches off about the middle of the sixteenth century, and dies away as a formal doctrine about the middle of the twelfth. In the early part of the fifteenth century the mutilation of the Lord's Supper, by taking away the cup from the laity, disappears. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, we find transubstantiation for the first time dogmatically taught, and in another two or three centuries all traces of it are lost again. In the twelfth century five of the sacraments disappear, and the two "ordained by Christ Himself" alone survive. In the ninth century the power of canonization for the first time falls into the stream of doctrine, although the tendency to saint worship and Mariolatry reaches further backward. In the beginning of the sixth century the papal supremacy is left behind, and with it the last formal trace of the corrupt dogmas of the East and the West. Three hundred years must be traced back to the Council of Nice. But we have already left behind all that separates us from Greece and Rome. We have seen at what dates their doctrines arose, and where they fell into the central stream. We now stand far above them, and yet the river itself has become no scanty stream, weak and shallow. It yet flows on, a river of truth, deep, broad, and strong, only the swifter because the truths have narrowed on either side. Still we trace it back, and yet at Nicea we have not arrived at the fountain-head. Thirteen creeds or fragments of creeds still lie between us and the first parent spring of all, bearing the same general character, reflecting the same truths. Further back, therefore, flows the river. The original spring is still beyond us ; although every voice now loudly proclaims where it is, and what. Still we take no man's word, but from saint to saint carefully trace the current to its source. Further back than the time of Irenæus the line of descent for a brief period becomes comparatively obscure. Intimations of a formal definite creed may be found in Ignatius, Clemens Romanus, Polycarp, and Justin Martyr, but they are fragmentary and uncertain. The period is like some reach of the earthly stream, where, amid the precipitous rocks and overhanging woods, its exact course cannot be positively traced. A little further on and the full river breaks into view again. We tread with reverent hearts and holy fear, for we are close to the fountain-head. We are looking into the first century of the Christian era, and here we find the abysmal depth whence the glorious river flows. It may be traced yet further back indeed even than this, but it is through secret channels, through type and symbol and ceremony and prophecy, with the clear light of day breaking upon it here and there ; rather like a river flowing underground than like a river in the full light of day, challenging by the strength of its first rush and the loud music of its flowing depths the eyes and ears of men. We are looking into the first century. Let us as it were go round, and get, so to speak, at the back of the cavernous profound whence the stream of truth rushes into the daylight. Let us go back to the year 750 of Rome, and behold! the open river is not. Somehow in that mysterious century it has its earthly birth. Here, explain it how you will, here, for an historical certainty, the faith begins. The proofs that the articles of the Nicene Creed are deduced from the Scriptures exist in familiar text-books. Whatever may be concluded as to the character of the Scriptures, it is certain that they and the faith sprang into being together ; and their birthday is in the period to which step by step I have traced the genealogy back. We stand, as it were, looking at the depths mysterious, yawning beneath and before the eye, inscrutable and unfathomable, whence the waters spring into the daylight. Look and watch and wonder. What spring is capacious enough to have given them birth? The channel itself we can see to be human as ourselves, though of finer and purer soil, as if the ever-gushing fountains of truth close by had clothed it with perennial beauty and verdure. Whence it issues the outward eye cannot see. The spring is there where no human hand can reach, no human foot can tread. It lies in the unseen, not the seen. Stand and watch the waters. All the dear familiar truths are there, known to us from our childhood, almost the

very words in which the church is accustomed to express them. How sweetly, purely, vigorously they well forth from the fountain infinite, for that fount is—God.—*E. Garbett, M.A.*

(4) *Epochs in the history of doctrine.*

a. Dr. W. B. Pope's division.

[12234] In studying the past history of the Christian church, four great epochs are defined, not by its relation to the nations of the earth, or by its own internal organization and divisions, but by the uplifting, expanding, and luminous manifestation, in successive order, of the four cardinal truths of our Christian faith. To consider and designate these developments of apostolic doctrine in the consciousness and creed of the Christian church, is of itself to testify to the in-dwelling Spirit who is leading the people of Christ into all truth by a way that is well ordered and sure. (John xv. 13 : ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν.) There is a simplicity, order, and harmony, like the growth of organic life, in the method by which the doctrine of the Scripture has been realized and unfolded amid the bewildering divisions, contests, and confusion of the "ages of Christendom," that plainly mark the presence and infallible guidance of Him whose mission it is to show "what He has received of Christ." (1) The mind of the church is filled first with the glory of the Lord. The doctrine of Christ is fittingly the first that is exalted and defined in the Confessions of the church. (2) After the nature of the Saviour, the nature of him who is saved, *i.e.*, of man, fixes the attention, and rouses the controversies of the church. Augustine has established the doctrine of human depravity, and the consequent doctrine of salvation by grace. (3) The Middle Ages slowly developed in articulate form the doctrine of the atonement, which, like all the other truths that have been successively lifted into prominence, minutely examined, carefully separated from error, and then distinctly enforced, was always an article of Christian faith ; but it was not till then evolved in dogmatic form. Never since Anselm's exposition of the redemption of Christ, has that theme lost its place in the system of Divine truth. (4) It remained lastly for Luther to bring forth to the light and magnify that Pauline doctrine, whose elucidation seems to follow naturally from the preceding doctrines which had been so firmly established, viz., the doctrine of faith. (5) In this age the controversies of the church within herself, and against her adversaries, have been turned in a new direction. Another epoch is being formed in which it is necessary to substantiate and verify the heritage it has received. The tendencies of the times now bear upon the Bible itself. It is not the subject matter of the Bible that has to be formulated, but it is its authorship, inspiration, authority, structure, congruity, and development of the different books, and of the whole volume, that has to be stated and maintained.

b. Scheme of Kliefoth (High Church Lutheran).

[12235] The characteristic difference between the four great periods of the history of doctrine arose from the several problems which the church has been called successively to solve. during the first period, the Greek theologians were employed upon the doctrines of theology in the restricted sense, including all that relates to the being and attributes of God, and to the mode of the Divine existence, the divinity of Christ, His natures and His person, the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit. When these had been discussed and settled by authority, the second period began, during which the Latin church was engaged in a like work with respect to anthropology, the nature and fall of man, original sin, free will, &c. In the third or Reformation period, the great subject of dispute and adjudication was soteriology, the method of salvation, atonement, justification, regeneration, &c. We are now at the commencement of a fourth great period ; and the only portion of the Christian system which remains to be developed is ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church, to which all controversies and investigations are now tending, and the settlement of which will be the harbinger of general union, purity, and peace.

Leading Characteristic. Age of—	Branch of Church.	Method.	Prominent Branch of Doctrine.
1. Formation of Doctrines .	Greek . .	Analytic .	Theology
2. Symbolical Unity .	Rom. Cat.	Synthetic .	Anthropology
3. Completion .	Protestant	Systematic	Soteriology
4. Dissolution .	?	?	Church

c. Scheme based upon that of Hagenbach. [12236]

Leading Characteristic. Age of—	Date of Starting-point. Historical or Biographical Event.	A.D.
1. Apologetics . . .	Close of Apostolic Age	80
2. Polemics	Death of Origen . . .	254
3. Systems	John Damascenus . .	730
4. Polemico-Ecclesiastical Symbolism .	Reformation	1517
5. Criticism	Leibnitz and Wolf . .	1720
6. Activity	The Present Day.	

d. Relation of the history of doctrine to other branches of theological science.

[12237] (1) It is a subdivision of church history separately treated on account of its

importance for theologians, and on account of its wide ramifications.

(2) It recounts the formation and contents of public confessions of faith, and the distinguishing principles set forth in them.

(3) It forms itself the basis of symbolics, or comparative dogmatic theology, which stands to it in the same relation as church statistics of any particular period stand to the advancing history of the church.

(4) It has frequently occasion to refer to the results of patristics; the history of heresies, especially those which survive.

(5) It occasionally refers to a "general history of religion," the history of philosophy, and the history of Christian ethics; also to archæology, and sciences auxiliary to church history, such as universal history, ecclesiastical philology, ecclesiastical chronology, diplomatics, &c.—*McClintock and Strong, Cyclopædia.*

e. The value of the history of doctrine.

[12238] Though the history of no doctrine can have a decisive influence in determining the faith of an evangelical theologian, who to this end searches the Bible exclusively, it is for him the most important of the history of the Christian Church, leads him into a more minute contemplation, and frequently into a deeper insight of biblical doctrines, and furnishes him with powerful weapons, both apologetic and polemic, against the various forms of error.—*Ibid.*

[12239] Every age has its questions, which master and penetrate its leading intellect. The controversy of Arius marks the early period; the problem of freewill and decrees that of Augustine; the dispute between Nominalism and Realism underlies profound views of original sin and redemption, which employs the scholastic mind; the mighty principle of justification sways the theology of the Reformation. Ideas which in one day are of vital interest are quite forgotten in the next. A theological proposition, in the time of Luther an *experimentum crucis* in too literal a sense, is now a piece of antiquated divinity; and men wonder that any should have gone to the stake for so abstract a matter. To come nearer home, our New England contests of old and new school, of physical and moral ability, and the like, are beginning to be merged in far broader questions, which have arisen on the theological horizon; in the contest, for life or death, between a gigantic naturalism and a Christian supernaturalism; or, on yet another side, between the claims of private judgment and Catholic authority. Yet, amid these differences, we ever behold the law of reproduction; the old questions are repeated in new form, and the reigning tendencies of belief and heresy cast in the same mould. Calvin reproduces Augustine, and Socinus develops the germ of Arius. The tenets of the school of Arminius are anticipated in the Greek fathers. Modern Oxford speaks in the cognate dialect of Cyprian and Vincentius. Early New England theology moved in the same cycle of metaphysical thought as the scholastic; and the later contests with a growing and now full-grown Unitarianism have been fought, inch by inch, on almost every portion of the ancient battle-ground, whose record will form, when a philosophic historian is found, a chapter of rich phenomena unsurpassed in Christian annals. It is facts like these which make the study of doctrinal history of so vast importance, not more than, but equally with, dogmatic theology itself. The doctrinal expressions of every age are more or less always polemic, and reflect a particular phase of thought. But, in the systematic study of opinions, the scholar takes each successive point of view; he sees pass before him the varied eras of faith, of struggle, and from his philosophic centre can calculate their real and apparent distance; he perceives in this or that doctrine the necessary reaction of one extreme upon another; he knows that in his own, as in other ages, prevailing errors have their little hour, and vanish, and he thus becomes, in his comprehensive largeness of vision, not a polemic of his time, but the Christian sage of all times, who, amid the fluctuating forms of belief, recognizes the *quod semper, ubique et ab omnibus*, the unchanged and unchangeable truth of revelation. —*E. A. Washburn, D.D.*

(5) *Symbolical and confessional doctrine.*

[12240] A creed, or rule of faith, or symbol, is a confession of faith for public use, or a form of words setting forth with authority certain articles of belief, which are regarded by the framers as necessary for salvation, or at least for the well-being of the Christian church. A creed may cover the whole ground of Christian doctrine and practice, or contain only such points as are deemed fundamental and sufficient, or as have been disputed. It may be declarative or interrogative in form. It may be brief and popular (as the Apostles' and Nicene), for general use in catechetical instruction and at baptism; or more elaborate, for teachers, as a standard of doctrine (the symbolical books of the Reformation period).—*P. Schaff, D.D.*

[12241] Σύμβολον, *symbolism* (from συμβάλλειν, to throw together, to compare) means a mark, badge, watchword, test. Cyprian, A.D. 250, first uses it in a theological sense. It was chiefly applied to the Apostles' Creed at the baptismal confession, by which Christians could be known and distinguished from Jews, heathen, and heretics, in the sense of a military synod or watchword (*tessera militaris*); the Christians being regarded as soldiers of Christ fighting under the banner of the cross (Ambrose, d. 397). Ruffinus uses the word likewise in its military sense, but gives it also the meaning of *collatio, contributio* (confounding σύμβολον with συμβολή), with reference to the legend of its contribution by the apostles. Others take the word in the sense of a compact or agreement. Still others derive it from the signs of recognition among

the heathen in their mysteries. Luther and Melancthon first applied it to Protestant creeds. A distinction is made sometimes between *symbol* and *symbolical books*, as also between *symbolia publica* and *privata*.—*Ibid.*

X. Its Scientific Features.

1 It is scientific in its method of gathering its principles.

(1) *Facts are studied for the purpose of discovering principles.*

[12242] If Christian inquiry consisted, as is often supposed, in nothing but the investigation of human opinions and opposing theories of Christian doctrine, so as to enable us to determine on which side, in religious controversy, the truth is to be found, there would be as little prospect of success in the future as there has been in the past. The mill-horse would still have to pace his endless round, while the same problems would present themselves afresh to every succeeding generation. But Christian inquiry, as conducted on the inductive method, is nothing of the kind. It is something essentially different from this. It consists in the study of the Christian facts themselves, for the purpose of discovering the great doctrinal principles revealed in them.—*Percy Strutt, M.A.*

(2) *The facts and the underlying principles are in the Bible as the facts and principles of science are in nature.*

[12243] There is a fine parallelism between the Bible and nature. The Bible contains theology as nature contains science. All the principles of science are in nature. It is the gradual discovery of these principles by researches into the arcana of nature that constitutes the progress of science. There is not a single principle in science that was not in nature first. Nature is the result of the application of the principles of Divine science—all perfect, all unerring. And it is just as men, by close observation and experiment, elicit these principles, and in their own humble and limited, yet often very wonderful way, apply them, that science advances. Now thus we take it to be with theological science. As natural science is the elicited knowledge of the volume of nature, theological science is the elicited knowledge of the volume of revelation.—*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*

(3) *The principles are reached through the facts by the inductive process.*

[12244] I do not depreciate the proper value of deduction. It enters largely into every sustained course of reasoning. Nor do I deny that many religious lessons and some points of doctrine are gained by this process. Infant baptism, for instance, is nowhere directly asserted in Scripture, but is clearly deduced from direct assertions. Our church declares what is contained in Holy Scripture, and what is gathered from it and proved by it, to be of equal authority. But, in proportion as the links of proof are lengthened, a degree of uncertainty, although it may be indefinitely small, hangs about the process. Even this, however, is absent from "the faith" as embodied in the Nicene Creed. For not one of its articles rests on deduction, but on the direct positive assertions of the Word. The immediate voice of God Himself alone renders doctrine binding upon the conscience. The process of gathering these truths out of Scripture is a process of induction. The texts bearing upon the special subjects stand in the position of the facts; the comparison of the texts with each other corresponds to the generalization from the facts; and the doctrine answers to the scientific truth. The technical statement, like the scientific formula, is but the assertion of the fact.—*E. Garbett, M.A.*

[12245] Within certain limits, and under due guidance, "inference" is the movement, it is the life of theology. The primal records of revelation itself, as we find them in Scripture, are continually inferential: and it is at least the business of theology to observe and marshal these revealed inferences, to draw them out and to make the most of them. The illuminated reason of the collective church has for ages been engaged in studying the original materials of the Christian revelation. It thus has shaped, rather than created, the science of theology. What is theology but a continuous series of observed and systematized inferences, respecting God in His nature and His dealings with mankind drawn from premisses which rest upon God's authority?—*Canon Liddon.*

(4) *The inductive process takes the facts not in their isolation but in their combination.*

[12246] The use of the Scriptures in dogmatics must not, however, consist in a mere appeal to single passages, or in a comparison of single passages; this mode of procedure too often betrays the narrow-minded view that nothing is true which cannot be proved to be literally found in the Bible. We agree rather on this point with Schleiermacher, when he says that in our biblical studies there should be constantly developed a more comprehensive use of the Scriptures, in which stress shall not be laid on single passages taken apart from the context, but in which attention is paid only to the longer and specially fruitful section, in order thus to penetrate the course of thought of the sacred writers, and find there the same combinations as those on which the results of dogmatic study themselves rest.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[12247] Astronomers must begin their investigations by taking the earth as their basis, and regarding it as their centre; but after having determined in this way that the sun is the true centre, they change their point of view, and look on the whole planetary system from the sun as the central point, and their measurements become heliocentric instead of geocentric. All inquirers into heavenly truth, proceeding in an inductive method, must, like astronomers, begin with the earth; but after having proceeded

a certain length, and determined that there is a God, they may view all things as from heaven. It is when surveyed from both points that we attain the clearest idea of their exact nature and relation one to another, and to God.—*McCosh.*

(5) *The inductive process takes account of all the facts and seeks to harmonize them.*

[12248] It is in theology, as a science, as it is in other sciences. In astronomy the results of multitudinous observations give certain facts, which must be all accounted for and included in any theory of the science which claims acceptance. In theology each passage of Scripture is a fact; and the undoubtedly ascertained qualities of man's nature are other facts. Any doctrinal theory, in order to be true, must unite in itself, and take account of, all these facts. If it fails to unite them (within those limits which are possible to man), it is not a true doctrine. If the results of our induction, carefully conducted, lead to two apparently conflicting doctrines, it does not follow of necessity that either is false. For example, the free-will of man, to such an extent at least as to make him responsible, is an unquestionable fact of Scripture and experience. The foreknowledge of God, and His universal sovereignty, are necessary deductions of reason and clear assertions of Scripture. Perfectly to reconcile these with man's free-will may be impossible. This need not distress us when we have carefully followed our facts to the verge of the infinite or the unknown. There we must leave them, and we need have little difficulty in feeling assured that the missing facts which would reconcile the apparent contradictions in our deductions lie within, and probably not many steps within, the dark margin at which we pause.—*T. P. Boultbee, D.D.*

[12249] Though man cannot add to or improve the subjects of any science, he may enlarge his own acquaintance with them—he may correct or qualify his former conclusions by a more copious induction of facts—he may push his generalizations into higher regions, and so as to lay hold of higher laws—and he may always purge his science of the defects which haste, self-confidence, or prejudice may have introduced into it. It is in this way that all the natural sciences have advanced and are advancing. There are no more planets now than there were in the days of Ptolemy; but we are acquainted with several of which he knew nothing. The sun is in no wise improved, nor are his relations to the earth in any wise altered since Hipparchus invented his epicycles, but we have made juster observations on both the sun and the earth since then; we know more about both of them, and about their mutual relations; and we have made more accurate investigation of the laws by which these relations are influenced. The result is, that our chart of the solar system, instead of being a confused and hypothetical delusion, "with cycle and epicycle scribbled o'er," is a just, and we may say nearly perfect, transcript of the actual aspect of Nature in that part of her domains. It is the same with the other sciences; they have advanced by getting accessions to the stores of their facts, by a more truthful analysis and classification of those facts, by the casting out of mere hypothetical assumptions which had usurped the place of facts, and by thus being brought more into a state of accordance with nature in its simplicity and majesty.

If, then, progress in science generally be the gradual bringing of science into a state of conformity with nature, progress in theological science must be the bringing of theology into a growing state of accordance with Divine revelation. What the theologian has to do in his science is exactly what the naturalist, *mutatis mutandis*, has to do in his; he must strive to collect *all* the facts of his science—to observe them accurately, to classify them accurately, to abstract from them all heterogeneous, all merely hypothetical admixtures; to generalize with a calm, clear, and steady mind, from what he has thus observed and classified—and thus to bring his science ever more and more into a harmony with nature and the Bible. A perfect theology is one which takes note of *all* the facts of revelation, whether in the world or in the Word; which takes note of them as they are, and not as they may be supposed to be; which takes note of them to the exclusion of others that may pretend to belong to them; and which, from this exact and scrupulous noting of them, proceeds to give them a scientific development, by classifying them according to the great principles they manifestly involve. In this way alone can theology be brought into correspondence with the simplicity and majesty of revelation.—*W. Lindsay Alexander, D.D.*

(6) *The inductive process strives to reduce the whole to laws which are in the facts and principles themselves.*

[12250] Science assumes that the relation of the biblical facts to each other, the principles involved in them, the laws which determine them, are in the facts themselves, and are to be deduced from them, just as the laws of nature are deduced from the facts of nature. In neither case are the principles derived from the mind and imposed upon the facts, but equally in both departments, the principles or laws are deduced from the facts and recognized by the mind.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

[12251] The two books of nature and of revelation are not merely written by the same hand, they are to a certain extent written in the same style; both are marked by a wondrous variety, yet with a certain unity pervading it; in both we observe the frequent repetition of typical ideas, in both we note the same absence of scientific arrangement. Any department of nature will illustrate our meaning. We select the group of the mammalia. We find the earth covered with different species of animals resembling one another in their way of nourishing their young, but we do not find them classified in nature,

One continent is not inhabited by those that ruminate and another by those that gnaw. The tiger in an Indian jungle is allied to the cat on our hearthrug; the antelopes of South Africa to the Persian gazelle, or the Alpine chamois. The ox, the weasel, and the rabbit take up their abode in the same field. Or, to look at the subject in reference to time instead of space, the mammalian type first meets our eye at Swanage or Stonesfield among the *débris* of the oolitic period, then come mammoths and elephants, and megatheria of all sorts, now extinct, and the rich zoological treasures of Kirkdale or Montmartre, till among the luxuriance of a recent fauna, man himself, the noblest of the mammalia, appears on the stage of this world's history. Placed in the midst of all this apparent confusion of animals, the zoologist has carefully to collect his facts before he can hope to generalize, or to discern typical resemblances, and build up a system; and then he meets with the whale and the bat to show how untrue to nature are the sharp lines of his classification. Just so in God's word, we have here a promise, there a tender exhortation, a doctrine lies imbedded in a narrative or an argument, a precept is conveyed in a burst of poetry or a group of proverbs. But in vain do we search the Bible for any body of divinity, for any theological system; we do not find one part devoted to the office of God in the scheme of redemption, another part to what is necessary on the side of man; we do not find a definition of original sin, or an exposition of the Trinity. The materials are all there from which the student may frame his own classification and draw his own lines of definition.—*British Quarterly Review.*

2 It is scientific in reducing its principles to form and order.

(1) *Its materials easily lend themselves to systematic treatment.*

[12252] The doctrines of Christianity constitute a system by virtue of the organic unity pervading them. It is not only that they have been systematized by theologians, but it is that an internal sequence and coherence pervades the doctrines themselves. They constitute a complete history of humanity and of the world. The act of creation and the relation existing between the Creator and the created form the first links of the chain. The primæval harmony of the two in the paradisaical state; the interruption of it by the sin and fall of man; the purpose of God to restore the broken harmony by the salvation of His fallen creatures; the work of the Incarnate Son, schemed, undertaken, and completed with this object; the operations of the Holy Ghost; the salvation of the individual soul, and the final glorification of the people of God at the restitution of all things—are doctrines which beyond all possible dispute are closely connected with each other. So close is their connection that the omission of any one dislocates the order of the rest, as manifestly as broken links in a chain destroy the continuity of the whole. Any misconception in one doctrine vitiates the conception of the whole, as certainly as a broken circuit interrupts the course of the electric current. For instance, a denial of the full creative work of God, or a low estimate of the extent of the depravity of man, extends its effect throughout the entire circle of doctrine. The faith is not an accidental aggregate of isolated units, but a coherence of connected members in an organized body. This structural unity of the faith arises naturally from the personal unity of its Author. One mind has schemed it all, and therefore one thought pervades it all. The authorship and the authority are equivalent. The faith is equally systematic in the structure of the inspired documents [1], in the relation of its doctrines to each other, and in the grounds of its obligations upon reason and conscience.—*E. Garbett, M.A.*

(2) *In its systematized form it takes rank with other sciences.*

[12253] Theology is "systematic" in the sense in which "astronomy" or "chemistry" or "geology," or any other of the sciences of "induction," are so; that is, as astronomy or chemistry is a systematized view of certain classes of facts in the external world, whether a perfect *rationale* of these facts can be given or not (generally it cannot), so systematic theology is a systematized view of the facts respecting God and our relations to Him; and a systematic *Christian* theology is such a view, obtained by induction, of the substantial contents of revelation. Chemistry, like theology, does not prove its principles *à priori;* and, like theology, it finds no lack of inexplicable mysteries when it proceeds to consider the ultimate facts it discovers, in relation to the unknown properties of matter with which they stand connected: its most searching analysis still leaves it in utter darkness with respect to the molecular structure of matter, and in little less as regards the *rationale* of the facts of chemical affinities. Still, it is a systematic exhibition of certain classes of phenomena, and of unspeakable value as far as it goes; and it is much the same with theology.—*British Quarterly Review*, 1866.

(3) *As a system it answers to a universal want of the human mind.*

[12254] The human mind, by its own law of progress and self-education, has from the earliest times endeavoured to generalize the facts that came under its cognizance, and to reduce its knowledge of things to groups. The formation of all such general terms as "tree," "animal," "man," "fire," shows the dawn and germ of the process. All terms and phrases which denote the qualities of the various objects of sense, such as descriptions of form, weight, colour, property, were further attempts at abstraction and generalization. The beginnings of science in different nations and civilizations were the still more comprehensive and penetrative attempts to reduce to the forms of the

human mind the multiform facts and relations of nature. Every science, from the time of Thales to Newton, from Anaxagoras to Comte and Darwin, has been witness to the ineradicable conviction, that as the wonderful phenomena of nature can be reduced to the forms of the human mind, can be thought out in their numerous relations to each other, man has been drawing nearer and nearer to the mind of God, and, as Kepler said, "thinking God's thoughts after Him." It is then in perfect harmony with this universal tendency of thought that religious men, that those who have believed that the Eternal has spoken to them, and given them His thoughts, and made known His will, should also have endeavoured to abstract and to generalize these revelations of the Divine nature, and to bring the whole into or under the forms of the human mind. Mental powers have been required for this process different from the spiritual faculties needed to receive and to utter Divine revelations, but they have been none the less necessary to the progress of the race.—*Ibid.* 1877.

(4) *In its divisions it proceeds on fixed principles.*

[12255] The division of the dogmatic material must naturally not be arbitrary, but must be carried out according to a fixed principle. A thoroughly good division requires that all the parts of the whole be included in it; that each part has its own proper place; and that the collective parts be not only co-ordinated by each other, but be subordinated to one central thought which they illustrate and develop. We may specially desire that the basis of the division be not sought elsewhere, but be derived from the domain of the science itself. Who would seek the clue to the treatment of some part of natural science in the domain of speculative philosophy? Who will not divide the history of the church differently from the history of the world? And again, who will not place the history of dogma in an order different from that of the church? A division may be logically irreproachable, and yet unsuited to its purpose, and thoroughly faulty. The cause of many failures in this method has been that men only asked, How can the doctrine of faith be brought into a symmetrical scheme to a well-defined whole? instead of considering what was the inner unity and connection of the revelation, and into what parts that unity spontaneously divided itself before the investigating eye.—*Van Oosterzee* (*condensed*).

XI. Its Technical Terminology.

1 Arises out of the necessities of the case.

[12256] The technical form and the technical language employed by theology to express the doctrines of the faith arise from the necessities of the inductive process. For many texts of Scripture contain one and the same truth. Take, for instance, the true divinity of Christ, or the indivisible union of the God head and the manhood in His one person. If. speaking of the first of these Bishop Pearson quotes more than one hundred texts. But to require for the clear assertion of the deity of Christ the repetition of the whole of these one hundred texts would be exceedingly absurd. We therefore adopt one formula, so worded as to express the common truth, and to combine in this one expression of it all the particulars contained in the texts. The church does this in the Apostles' Creed by the words, "I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son." When the Arian heretics so refined upon language as to enable them to use these words of the Creed, and yet under cover of them to deny that Christ was true God, the Fathers of the Council at Nicæa made their language more positive, and declared the Son to be "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God." The Creed of Athanasius employs a term of yet more precise significance, and proclaims Him to be "God of the substance of the Father." The Church of England in the Second Article repeats nearly the same words, "Very and Eternal God, of one substance with the Father." But these fuller expressions add nothing whatever to the truth of our Lord's true deity, as the Son of God, expressed in the Apostles' Creed. That one phrase, "His only Son," includes all that the longer definitions include. But although it includes all the truth, it does not specifically exclude all the forms of error with the same definiteness as they do. For they grew out of the experience of controversy, and met its exigencies as they arose. —*E. Garbett, M.A.*

2 Is not scriptural in form but in substance.

[12257] Some of the terms confessedly are not to be found in Scripture—such as the word Person, the word Trinity, the phrase Catholic Church, and others of the same kind. From Athanasius down to Calvin the Church has ever given the same answer to objections drawn from this source. She has ever replied, that although the words are not in Scripture, the sense expressed by them is there. The words are a vehicle to the meaning, a sign of the thing signified. Each one is really an embodied dogma, accepted on the authority of many texts summarized into the single word. If the dogma be in Scripture, and no more accurate term can be found to express it, it is sheer wantonness to object to the word. For in no other way than the use of such terms can separate dogmas be combined in a common proposition. By an exactly similar process the terminology of science has been formed. Each word expresses an ascertained truth, and can only be explained to an untrained mind by the long statement of the truth. Such are the phrases, "specific gravity," "insensible distances," and a host of others. But as the incessant reiteration would be equally absurd and vexatious, the truth is embodied in a single term for the sake of brevity and convenience.—*Ibid.*

3 Is of value in elucidating the doctrines for which it stands.

[12258] The great words of theology, and still more of the Bible, are not dead words, whose classification is of importance merely for the sake of perspicuity; but are, as Luther says of St. Paul's words, "living creatures having hands and feet." By getting below the surface, by making out what they are, or were in themselves, we arrive at the very essence of the Christian doctrine or dogma.—*Dean Stanley.*

4 Is of great historical and moral importance.

[12259] Theological terminology often becomes painfully obscure to after generations and distant peoples, to nations using different languages and living amid other circumstances. But the old creed-form indicates the high-water marks of faith at moments of consummate interest to the progress of mankind. Expressions which now fail to rouse enthusiasm, or even to convey altogether distant ideas, were at one time war-cries of contending forces, the utterances of intense conviction—were once maintained by folios of now forgotten argument, regarded perhaps as the very pillars of the moral universe, and worthy even of great sacrifice of blood and treasure to uphold or defend. There was a time when every word of the Creed of Chalcedon, every syllable of the Catechism of Trent, every line of the Confession of Augsburg or of Westminster, every clause of the Thirty-nine Articles, meant life or death to men and women. Quite recently faith could cheerfully sacrifice comfort, position, honours, life itself, to maintain propositions, many of which may be unintelligible now—not as historical realities, but as living forms of conviction. But until the impossibility and incredibility of Divine relation be proved to the satisfaction of cultivated intelligence, the value of all these great fundamental generalizations of Divine revelation, the value of the very forms in which they have enshrined themselves, in face of the antagonisms of heathenism, materialism, and worldliness, can scarcely be overstated. When sciolists treat with wit, irony, or scorn, certain creeds or articles, let the hour, the place, be called to mind when these words were dearer than dear life to multitudes, and when they stood in living, intimate, thrilling relation with some of the most impressive realities of human existence. Thus, phrases which have become almost unintelligible in their translated form, meant, when first uttered, a protest against polytheism, or spiritual despotism, or blatant animalism: they were cries for Divine help, they were acknowledgments of Divine supremacy or vindications of human freedom. There was a direct and thrilling link of connection between these forms and the life of souls. If these evils are yet prevalent in the world, the forms are not without use and potency at the present hour. They may start into fresh significance any day. They are capable of wonderful expansion and exposition. Errors and negations of God and His revelation which were current in the second and fourth centuries have reappeared in the nineteenth. We have to fight again the battle with paganism and dualism and atheism. We have to aid the faith of our brethren in the Divine original and eternal destiny of man. We have still to say what is meant by the incarnation and humiliation of the Son of God. We have to confront a spiritual despotism to which that of Innocent III. and of Gregory VII. were relatively the mere lispings of infancy. There is boundless significance to-day in the Theses of Luther, the Apology of Jewell, the Westminster Confession of Faith. Like notes of music brought before a competent orchestra, some of these crabbed forms and archaic terms and carefully balanced sentences may and do, when occasion arises, ennoble the pealing chorus or compel the eloquence of song. The thought of the dead artist becomes on due occasion some choral burst of instrumental harmony. The recorded faith of churches and communities, the confessions and apologies of mighty movements of the church, contain within themselves the power of shaping anew the destinies of the world.—*British Quarterly Review*, 1877.

XII. Its Progress and Development.

1 The various opinions on this subject.

[12260] The whole body of religious truth and theological opinion, as it now exists, may, without absurdity, if not with strict propriety in all points, be compared to an extensive mine, which has been known and wrought for ages, and on which mining companies and individual miners are still busily employed. Among these miners there is a great diversity of practice, arising from a corresponding difference of theory, as well in relation to the value of the ore as to the method of procuring it. All are agreed that gold is to be found there, and that it there exists in combination with other metals or with certain earths. But one of the oldest and most active companies proceeds upon the principle that these adjuncts must not be separated from the gold, having been formed in combination with it, and being for that reason equally precious. Another company, or rather a solitary member of the first, departs so far from the opinion of his fellows as to hold that the adjuncts are of later date, having by some mysterious process been evolved from the gold, in which they were originally latent, and of which they consequently still form part. A third set, or company, assume an opposite position, namely, that the gold has been formed, or at least brought to perfection, by the successive combinations into which it has entered as a constant element, and that the adscititious substances with which it is now mixed have had a share in this creative process, although worthless in themselves and now superfluous. A fourth

class admits the latter part of this opinion, but rejects the first, alleging that the adjuncts are and always have been worthless, and insisting on their total separation from the precious ore, by precisely the same methods and the use of the same implements employed by their own predecessors centuries ago. Any change in the hereditary processes of mining and metallurgy is looked upon by these as a depravation of the gold itself. By way of contrast to this strange idea, a fifth set steadily maintain that no regard whatever should be paid to any former practice or contrivance, but that every miner should begin *de novo*, manufacture his own tools, and invent his own methods, as if no experiment had yet been made and no result accomplished. While each of these laborious companies is wedded to its own peculiar theory and practice, and regardless of the rest, there is a sixth, which differs from them all, and yet in some degree agrees with each, by carefully distinguishing the gold from the alloy, and laboriously separating one from the other, in the use of the best methods which their own experience or that of their forerunners has brought to light and proved to be effectual.

The application of this parable, so far as it requires or admits an application, is as follows: The first class or company of miners represents *the vulgar Popish doctrine*, which puts Scripture and tradition on a level, and requires the monstrous after-growth of ages to be treated with the same consideration as the primitive doctrines and institutions, out of whose corruption it has sprung. The second theory is *Newman's*, in which a series of gradual additions to the primitive simplicity is granted, but alleged to be the natural evolution of a germ or principle implicitly contained in the original revelation, and designed from the beginning to be thus evolved. Over against this stands the doctrine maintained by many *German writers*, which recognizes all the absurdities and heresies of past times, either as modifications of the truth, or as processes without which it would never have attained its present value, so that the truth is actually more true than it would have been but for the many falsehoods which have heretofore usurped its place, obscured its light, and marred its beauty. The miners who persist in the exclusive use of the ancestral implements and methods are those *orthodox traditionalists* who, not content with holding fast to the original doctrines of the Reformation, attach equal sanctity and value to the ancient forms of definition and elucidation, making no distinction between one who teaches a new doctrine and one who propounds an old one in new language. These theologians would would as soon go to the stake for the scholastic formula in which the truth is set forth by some human teacher as they would for the truth itself or the authoritative form in which the Word of God exhibits it.

A worthy counterpart to this school is the one which rushes to the opposite extreme of foolishly ignoring all the past, and *makes self the starting-point of all development* and human progress. These are the miners who are so afraid of being hampered by adherence to the implements and methods of their predecessors, that they obstinately sink new shafts instead of going down the old ones, and waste no little time in the creation of original spades and grubbing-hoes.

Lastly, *the really enlightened* miners, among whom we of course aspire to hold an humble place, while they maintain the immutability of the truth itself and the completeness of its revelation in the Word of God, believe themselves at liberty, or rather, under the most solemn obligations, to employ the best means of discovery, exposition, illustration, and diffusion, and as a necessary means to this end, seek to know the methods of their predecessors and the fruits of their exertions, abjuring neither the experience of their fathers nor the use of their own judgment, but applying both with freedom and discretion, as alike essential to complete success. These miners neither bind themselves to use the rude and awkward apparatus of the first explorers, nor engage to fabricate a new one for themselves. They only promise to employ the best, an undertaking which implies a due regard to previous improvements no less than to fresh researches, as it still holds good of the religious teacher, whether from the chair, the pulpit, or the press, that "every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 1853.

2 The opinions on this subject examined.

(1) *Those which pervert the true doctrine of development.*

[12261] *The theory of Petavius* adopted by Dr. Newman has prejudiced many devout minds against the true doctrine of development. And not unnaturally. For when we find it maintained that there can be an indefinite expansion of the Christian faith as time progresses, and that the church is not only able to mould new shapes out of old truths, but also to introduce new truths into the deposit of the original faith, by the action of her own mind upon the original revelation; when the ideas of congruity, *à priori* desirableness and suitableness, are made the tests of a development being true or false; when the Apostles' Creed, held in the first ages to contain within it all necessary articles of the faith, is declared an incomplete summary and a mere sample of the more elementary parts of that faith; when all this and much more is propounded and justified in the name of development, no wonder that men should fear a word bearing so ill-omened a sound. For this theory implies that there is no fixity, no certainty. The truth which St. Jude said was once for all delivered to the saints, and the alteration of which St. Paul declared to make the innovator anathema, may be enlarged, amplified, extended, developed, till it is totally transformed into

something else from what it previously was, and absolutely contradictory of its original self; nor can it be doubted that the theory implies that the apostles to whom our Lord addressed Himself in John xv. 15 were ignorant of Christian truth, and were but babes in Christ, not full-grown men of perfect stature; or else that they voluntarily kept back what they knew to be essentials of the faith from those to whom they were sent to preach the gospel and make disciples of. Such an evolution of doctrine is pronounced by Dr. Mill "more to resemble the growth of Brahminical theology and science, from the dissimilar stock of the Vedas, as the Indian gymnosophists love to describe it, than the genuine developments of that faith which the apostles once for all planted in the earth."—*F. Meyrick, M.A.*

[12262] There is a theory which makes development to consist in *Christianity casting off its husk and coming forth in its original brightness.* When analyzed it seems to consist in the substitution of hazy fancies for the coverings which are the necessary forms of Christian doctrine, the said hazy fancies being paraded as the central idea. For example, the coming of Christ in the flesh is rationalized into the idea of the delivery of man by the Eternal Spirit through the manifestation of Himself, from the tyranny of the carnal principle; His resurrection into the victory won, through suffering, by the higher principle in man over the lower; and each of the other facts revealed in Scripture are made to be nothing else than a materialized representation of some spiritual truth, in a form capable of being apprehended by the gross minds of ordinary men. In short, the Gnostic theories are once more presented to us, and called a development of Christianity. As though the incarnation of the Son of God and His resurrection from the dead were not either facts or falsehoods, and as though, if they were facts once, they were not equally true and important facts now, and as though, if they were false at first, they were worth troubling ourselves about any more than any other mythical or poetical representations of bygone ages!—*Ibid.*

[12263] But surely, it is said, the churches will never be content with a stereotyped theology; why shall theology not keep pace with the other sciences which are making such remarkable progress? If the enemies of our confessional theology will only consent to conduct their inquiries, even according to the method and spirit which have directed and developed the successes of secular science, we can assure them their reforming efforts will be most welcome. It is the habit, in scientific inquiries, to recognize and accept certain principles as fixed and immutable beyond cavil or question, and not to allow an exceptional phenomenon to derange these fixed laws or principles, and cast all loose again. We demand, then, that they should deal with theology, as they deal with any widely accepted system of astronomical, or botanical science to which they take exception; they do not undervalue or reject botanical science because nature is untechnical, informal, and free, or reject the demonstrations and discoveries of Newton and La Place, because the telescope would be more free to range and sweep the heavens. The liberal theory implies, in fact, that we cannot tell what Christianity is, and that the Christians of eighteen centuries did not understand it: it palsies all preaching, reduces the guilt of unbelievers to an infinitesimal point, since the points of belief are so difficult to ascertain, makes it impossible for ministers to judge a heretic or cast him out for false doctrines, and nullifies the office of the Holy Spirit as the teacher of truth.—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 1867.

(2) *Those who deny the doctrine of development.*

a. The denial is based on a misapprehension of the true doctrine.

[12264] The schoolmen warmly debated whether theology was a progressive science. The one side strenuously maintained the negative, appealing triumphantly to the finality of Scripture, the unanimity of experience, and the closed canon. By the other side the victory was claimed on the score of the steady improvement in Biblical interpretation, the gradual apprehension of doctrine, and the prevalent uncertainty upon many features of revealed truth. Before the discussion had proceeded far, it became evident that this was but another instance of the old story of the knight and the shield. Inquiry necessitated investigation, accurate investigations resulted in more minute distinctions, more refined distinctions disclosed shades of truth previously unsuspected, and the controversy solved itself.—*A. Cave, B.A.*

b. This denial is foolish when it is considered that some kind of progress is inevitable.

[12265] To those who deny all progress it may be replied that all that is contended for by the advocates of legitimate development is a logical one, which draws conclusions by logical rules from premisses revealed in Scripture. Such action of the human mind as this is recognized in the words, "may be proved thereby," in Church Article. If a conclusion necessarily follows from a fact or statement of Scripture, we are permitted to draw such conclusion; and so, if from the great dogmas of Christianity there may be derived by necessary consequence other truths, we may accept them as having been implied or involved in the larger statement. Thus, from the doctrine of the Trinity there follows by necessary consequence the doctrine of consubstantiality of the Son, and of the personality of the Holy Ghost; and in like manner, to take a negative instance, the condemnation of Monophysitism involved in itself the condemnation of Monothelitism, for there could not have been two perfect natures

in the Son unless there had been a will in each. —*F. Meyrick, M.A.*

3 Theology in the first age.

[12266] It would be folly to expect in that age an integral system : we must be content to discover ideas and tendencies. The harbinger of this Christian philosophy was Justin Martyr ; yet while in his writings we find whole suggestions, especially in his idea of the λόγος σπερματικος (v. Apollog. II.), which shows a perception of the unity of all philosophic truth, with him Christianity was rather a fuller revelation of doctrines, already known in part by the ancient mind, than of a central, supernatural fact of redemption. It is when we turn from his cruder reasonings to the works of Clement and Origen that we find the richest developments. Filled with the spirit of Christian faith, while nursed in the atmosphere of Greek genius, their writings are a mine of precious metal, as yet in the ore, but piercing the soil everywhere with broad veins, and its very sands heavy and shining with grains of golden wisdom. Origen is greater and more sympathetic of the two. We have nothing to say here of his errors. The fallacy of critics, in judging their remains, has resulted from looking at them in the mass, and so pronouncing them a farrago of follies and fancies. All the works of that age are what Clement called his *Stromata*, materials for a doctrinal edifice rather than the edifice itself. It is not their views on particular doctrines that claim our attention ; it is only their fundamental ground as to the relation of Christianity to reason ; and it is by our recognition of this their central aim that we must judge of the influence of those great men. Clement, and yet more, Origen, in his work περὶ ἀρχῶν laid down this position, new to that age, that the Divine revelation was the distinct source of all truths which concerned redemption ; that, while the speculative reason might range freely beyond the circle of these truths, within this it must bow in faith, and from this centre build up a Christian philosophy and ethics. It was thus a position, opposed on one side to the empiricism of the mere letter, on the other to the idealism which destroyed it. This was their work ; thus they laid the corner stone of a legitimate Christian science, and this result they handed down to the ages after them. The rubbish and dross of Origen were cast aside ; the gold was refined into later and better wisdom.—*E. A. Washburn, D.D.*

4 Its development and progress when deteriorated.

(1) *Not altogether unserviceable to the truth.*

[12267] Almost all the great practical doctrines of the gospel, after having been presented in their purity by the apostles, were gradually deteriorated, until they came to be almost entirely perverted ; and then, by the interposition of God, they were rescued from the load of corruption under which they were buried, and exhibited anew in their original brightness. During the whole period of declension, however, these doctrines never ceased to be recognized. They were not only distinctly apprehended and openly avowed by here and there a chosen witness, but they underlay the religious experience of thousands who never framed them into doctrinal propositions ; and they gave form and character to the very corruptions of which they were the subjects. These corruptions were not so much errors entirely foreign to the gospel, as perverted forms of truth. A leper is still a man ; and the lineaments of the human form may be traced under all the disfiguring effects of disease. So the truth is always to be discerned under the grossest corruptions to which it has been subject. When the Church of the middle ages taught that there could be no regeneration or holiness but by means of certain rites, this was not a denial of the necessity of grace, but a false view of the mode and conditions of the Spirit's operations. When it was taught that pilgrimages and penances obtained the pardon of sins, it was still asserted that they were the means of securing an interest in the Christ, to whom all their efficacy was referred. When the priest interposed himself between the sinner and God, it was not that he dared to deny the priesthood of Christ, but that he assumed that Christ's priesthood was exercised through the church. Behind these fearful corruptions, therefore, which hid the truth from the view of the people, were still to be discerned the great doctrines of the Bible. As this is true with regard to other points, it is no less true with regard to the doctrine of the church. All the corruptions of that doctrine, great and destructive as they have proved, are but perversions of the truth.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

5 The landmarks which this progress has already passed.

[12268] A good way of determining the progressive landmarks of theology might be by selecting typical texts to describe the points made emphatic by the principal teachers of the church. Thus, to take only six. It would connect the name of Athanasius with the words, "Go ye into all the world, teaching and baptizing, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Augustine with the words, "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly." Anselm with the words, "Christ suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Remigius: "I am the good shepherd ; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. My sheep hear my voice." Luther: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works

of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." And Calvin: "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."—*Professor John Duncan, LL.D.*

6 The further needed progress.

[12269] There is a large sphere of inquiry still open to the scanctified scholarship of the church; particular portions of systematic theology may demand re-adjustment, the consistency of systems as a whole may be presented in a fuller and clearer light, excrescences may be pared off, the meaning of the sacred text may be brought out more intelligently by deeper learning and critical insight, and all that is of real value in the philosophies of the time may be adopted and utilized. There is room, then, for improvement in various departments, but not such improvements after Tübingen models, as, under the pretence of defending a doctrine, will attempt explanations that subvert it—not such improvements as will bring us back under the bondage of exploded philosophies—Neo-Platonism and the like—which unmeaning phraseology, seems intended to cover a variety of view on religious questions, according to the exigencies of their polemic strategy.—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 1867.

[12270] In the critical studies which distinguish the theology of our time, the adversaries of the orthodox faith of the church have gained the immediate advantage of precedence in time. This has generally been the case. The assault precedes the defence. Seldom has the church spontaneously, and with systematic manifold labour which has been evoked and sustained by her own purpose, elaborated, sifted, and defined any one of the great Christian doctrines. An Arius is necessary to call forth the Nicene Creed. Pelagianism must precede the expositions of Catholic faith by Augustine. In like manner the doctrine of the church with regard to the Bible, though it has existed as a mighty inarticulate faith, has never hitherto been minutely examined or exactly formulated. It needed the attacks of unbelieving criticism to rouse the attention, and to concentrate the labours, of Christian scholars upon this subject, in order that, after their investigations and discussions, the *communis sensus* of the church may express, in clear, well-grounded, and articulate language, the doctrine of the church upon this subject. The providence of the Spirit continues to use the hostility of men who attack and repudiate the faith of the church in order to awaken a profounder consciousness of that faith, and to stimulate such combined and thorough investigations as shall define that faith in accurate terminology, and establish it on a secure basis.—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

7 The Divine direction of its development.

[12271] In the bosom of creation and revelation there are yet waiting to be revealed "things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man." May we not then pray that God will give unto us, too, the Christians of our own time and generation, "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the acknowledging of Him, that the eyes of *our* understanding also may be enlightened, and *we* too may know more and more what is the hope of His calling, and what His power to usward who believe." We believe that the Spirit is working now, working now as He ever has worked, "preventing us with his most gracious favour, and furthering us with his continual help." And when we affirm that the work of the apostles and evangelists was peculiarly the Spirit's work, that they were inspired by Him for their special office, let us never deny that He inspires men still. Only let us remember that their work once done, was done for ever; their work, once completed, can never be done over again.—*C. A. Swainson, M.A.*

XIII. Its Relations.

1 To the church and to the Scriptures, and to the Author of both.

[12272] The theory of dogma includes three elements. If we start from our own standing-point, the first in order is the church as a visible community of saints, linked by a continuous succession of members to the time of our Lord. The second element is the existence in the possession of this church of a body of dogmatic truth traceable to the same period and identical in substance during every age. Third in the calculation is the canon of the Scriptures, as the authoritative documents of the faith; the fountain-head, from which all the streams of truth have flowed, and to which they may be traced back. All the three, the church, the dogma, and the documents, synchronize. They appear in the history of the world at the same time, that time being identified by independent evidence with the ministry of Jesus Christ the Prophet of Nazareth. They are found to stretch side by side from that date continuously to the present time, and they still exist in indissoluble union. They are thus, when considered simply as matters of historical fact, three distinct lines of evidence converging into one conclusion, three rays of light shining out of one Sun. The church might conceivably have existed without the dogma, the dogma without the church, and the sacred writings considered as ancient books without either the one or the other. As a matter of fact they all exist, and have ever existed, together, a threefold cord between man and God.—*E. Garbett, M.A.*

2 To faith.

[12273] Dogmatics does not make *doubt* its starting-point, as philosophy is often required to do; it is not developed out of the void of scepticism, but out of the fulness of faith; it does not make its appearance in order by its

arguments to prop up a tottering faith, to serve as a crutch for it, as if, in its old age, it had become frail and staggering. It springs out of the perennial, juvenile vigour of faith, out of the capacity of faith to unfold from its own depths a wealth of treasures of wisdom and of knowledge, to build up a kingdom of acknowledged truths, by which it illumines itself as well as the surrounding world. Dogmatics serve, therefore, not to rescue faith in the time of its exigency, but to glorify it—*in gloriam, in gloriam Dei.*—*Bp. Martensen.*

[12274] The body of doctrine known as the Christian faith is distinct from the quality of faith, but it is not separable from it. The one is the objective work of the Holy Ghost; the other His subjective work. In the one, the Spirit provides the material for faith; in the other, He bestows its living power and energy. The one is the outward structure, the other the indwelling life. The body is not the life, but it is in the organized body that the Spirit lives, and through it the Spirit acts. The outward doctrines are not the soul's inner act; yet that Divine faculty by which the soul takes hold of Deity, and comes into actual immediate contact with things unseen, cannot act without the doctrines. Faith can no more live and work in this imperfect state of ours without objective truths to throw light into the intellect and supply food for the affections, than a spirit can live and work without the instrument of the body. In another world it may be different. Amid the fruitions of heaven and the full blaze of the beatific vision of God, the glorified spirit of the saint may unite itself by immediate contact with the Deity, just as in the world of the unseen disembodied spirits live a life, doubtless of intense activity and measureless capacity for enjoyment or for suffering, apart from the body as it moulders meanwhile in the grave. But in our present state body and spirit are constitutionally associated, and it is but the dream of the fanatic to think of separating them. In the same way belief can only live on what is believed. Conviction, affection, emotion, dissociated from definite points of belief, become evaporated into ghostly names, and merge into mystical fanaticism or sceptical indefiniteness.—*E. Garbett, M.A.*

3 To exegesis.

[12275] When exegesis has done its proper work on the elements of theology, it is still necessary, if we would see how they are related and co-ordinated, how they limit and illustrate one another, that we should take these separate "polished stones" and see what fabric it is they compose; in other words, make an induction of the most important truths, and as viewed in their mutual relations and subordination, out of the contents of Scripture. If we would have a clear notion of the sum of the results, or the relations of one truth to another, this is necessary. Now the two processes are very distinct, though the one is the complement of the other, and they are both constantly exhibited in the treatment of secular literature. For example, after exegesis has done its utmost for every sentence in every dialogue of Plato, there would still remain the question, which has tasked the utmost energies of many a great thinker, "What is the entire system of philosophy which the diversified writings of the Greek philosopher were intended to propound!" And, in relation *this* object, many an accomplished grammarian has proved but a sorry commentator.

Without this patient induction, the man of a few texts is apt to be in the same position as the man who is prejudiced in his exegesis by the preconceptions of a narrow system of theology. Extremes meet; and both these men, in different ways, though for a similar reason, namely, the want of a comprehensive induction from Scripture, commit the same error, *i.e.*, they hastily look about for reasons which shall support a preconceived and partial hypothesis; and if texts look another way, every sort of adroit artifice or open violence of criticism—coaxing and the thumbscrew by turns—is exercised upon them to break their refractory spirit or bend them to compliance. But it is only as the key turns in all the wards of the lock that we know it fits; and in like manner, when the results of interpretation fairly quadrate with every Scripture statement on the same subject, then, and then alone, may we be perfectly satisfied with them.—*British Quarterly Review*, 1866.

4 To apologetics.

[12276] In relation to apologetical science, dogmatics must be regarded as essentially resting upon it, inasmuch as here all that has been secured by the former science must necessarily appear as its ultimate grounding. For if apologetics deals with the genuineness and authenticity of the Scripture records, the results of these investigations must appear in dogmatics in the reception of these Scriptures as an infallible ground and ultimate source; if it deals with the general question of Christian evidences, the results must appear in dogmatics in the acceptance of the Christian religious ideas; if it deals with the question of the possibility of certain Scripture facts, as of miracles, prophecy, &c., all these reappear in dogmatics, when, from their apologetically established possibility, we dogmatically maintain their reality. Yet while we acknowledge this intimate connection which subsists between the science of apologetics and the science of dogmatics, we must be equally careful to avoid any confusion regarding their distinctive spheres.—*J. Macpherson, M.A.*

5 To the office and work of the religious teacher.

[12277] The position of inquiry is inconsistent with the first conditions of the ministerial office. A teacher must know what he teaches; and where teaching is moral and experimental, must hold as the guide and comfort of his own soul

what he stands forward to proclaim to be the guide and comfort of other men's souls. Who can ever forget to the last day of life the solemn question put to him at his ordination, "Wilt thou be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word?" or, while memory continues, lose the recollection of the charge, "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God and to minister the Holy Sacraments in the congregation?" An inquirer after truth cannot be a teacher of truth. He may teach, no doubt, others less advanced than himself, but it will be the teaching of his own struggles and difficulties. An honest and truthful mind must reflect itself in all its outgoings. The language must be the mirror of the man. What is in the heart must, consistently with self-respect and the love of truth, find its utterance in the mode of thinking, feeling, and speaking. A teacher should be a believer, not an inquirer; and a teacher in the ministry of a dogmatic Church should be a believer in a dogmatic faith. He dare not teach what he does not assuredly believe, lest he should either convert a lie into the truth of God, or turn the truth of God into a lie.

The humble village preacher or city missionary, little as he may know of the history of doctrine, little as he may value its terminology, could not do what he does, or be what he is, but for the creeds and formularies by which he sets so little store. For many of the terms he finds it convenient, or even necessary, to use he is indebted to dogmatic theology; while others which he does not employ are held in solution in his mind, and are with him though he knows it not. The range of his obligations to dogma extends from the Nicene Creed to the Westminster Confession, or later on. Literally it was for him that the Nicene Council discomfited Arianism, and made the word Homoousion the chosen symbol of the Church's faith in the true Godhead of Jesus Christ. For him Anselm asked the question, "Cur Deus Homo?" and answered it by bringing out the doctrine of satisfaction for sin by the voluntary death of the God-man. It would be easy to multiply illustrations. The popular sermon, the Sunday-school address, the article in the religious magazine, reveal to the student their dogmatic origin and line of descent.—*Professor F. W. Macdonald.*

6 To religion itself.

(1) *Religion and theology are distinct.*

a. The one is the product of intellect, the other of faith.

[12278] Theology is the product of the intellect seeking after worthy definitions of the Divine—an inevitable task imposed both by the development of Christian thought and the rise of anti-Christian error. Religion is the fruit of faith, the life within the soul cleaving to a higher Life and a Perfect Sacrifice, even where knowledge is obscure and dogma lacking.—*Principal Tulloch.*

b. The one begins with God, the other with the soul.

[12279] Theology signifies the knowledge of God as He is. And it is dying out among us in these days. Much of what is called theology now is nothing but experimental religion, which is most important and useful when it is founded on the right knowledge of God, but which is not itself theology. For theology begins with God, but experimental religion, right or wrong, begins with a man's own soul. Therefore it is that men are unaccustomed to theology. They shrink from it as something very abstruse, only fit for great scholars and divines, and almost given up nowadays even by them. They do not know that theology, the knowing of God, is full of practical everyday comfort and guidance for their conduct and character, yea, that it is—so says the Bible—everlasting life itself.—*Rev. Charles Kingsley, M.A.*

c. The one is knowing about God, the other is knowing God.

[12280] The patriarch's words (Job xlii. 5) suggest the distinction between theology and religion; or, in other words, the distinction between a religious faith which is merely speculative and theoretical, and a faith which is experimental and practical. To know *about* God is not necessarily to *know* God. To have religious convictions and beliefs is one thing, but to be possessed of spiritual apprehensions and affections is quite another. The one is concerned only with knowledge or opinions; the other with character. What the patriarch calls "*hearing* of God by the hearing of the ear," has merely respect to what one knows or believes about God. What he calls "*seeing* Him with his eye," has reference to a direct and experimental acquaintance with Him. The one is theological belief; the other personal religion.—*R. Milne, M.A.*

d. The one is the science, the other the art of Christian life.

[12281] A knowledge of theology is by no means a proof of a religious character, and many men are religious who are quite destitute of any scientific theology. Theology and religion are related to each other as science and art, theory and practice, knowledge and life. Religion is character and conduct, inspiration, conviction, obedience to law, fulfilment of duty, worship, prayer, praise, a holy living, a triumphant dying. Theology sets forth those principles upon which such life depends.—*Ll. D. Bevan, D.D.*

(2) *Religion and theology are yet united.*

a. Religion is inseparable from theology.

[12282] A religion without theology means, for the most part, a religion without God.—*Prof. Robertson Smith.*

b. Religion is founded on theology.

[12283] It will not do for us to take refuge in that instinctive horror of systematic divinity and to say, "Our position is religious, not

theological; we are more concerned with life than with creed, with practice than with thought, with piety than with speculation." Why, life, practice, piety, are in large measure built upon creed—are in large measure determined by and dependent upon our ideas of God, our conceptions of duty, of salvation, of eternal things; and this creed, these ideas and conceptions, are our theology.—*British Quarterly Review.*

[12284] Religion, to support itself, must rest consciously on its object: the intellectual apprehension of that object as true is an integral element of religion. In other words, religion is practically inseparable from theology. The religious Mohàmmadan sees in Allah a being to whose absolute decrees he must implicitly resign himself; a theological dogma then is the basis of the specific Mohammadan form of religion. A child reads in the Sermon on the Mount that our heavenly Father takes care of the sparrows, and of the lilies of the field, and the child prays to Him accordingly. The truth upon which the child rests is the dogma of the Divine Providence, which encourages trust, and warrants prayer, and lies at the root of the child's religion. In short, religion cannot exist without some view of its object, namely, God; but no sooner do you introduce any intellectual aspect whatever of God, nay, the bare idea that such a Being exists, than you have before you not merely a religion, but at least, in some sense, a theology.—*Canon Liddon.*

c. Theology is the power of religion.

[12285] The doctrine was not meant to be an opinion, but a power: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." It therefore had to pass from the form of a Divine announcement into the form of a human experience. It had to establish its own connection with the world of human thoughts and feelings. Once spoken by the mouth of the Lord, it might perhaps have been left to make this transition according to the natural laws of the human mind. But the transition in itself was too great, the consequences of error in the first stage of it would be too momentous for the Author and Finisher of our faith to leave the Church to her ordinary resources at so critical a moment. He would give a Divine certainty and authority to the first human apprehensions of His truth. He would make it sure that He had Himself conducted those first experiences and applications of the word, by which future experiences and applications might be guided and tried for ever. Therefore the word spoken *to* men by the voice of Jesus changed into a word spoken *in* men by His Spirit, creating thus a kind of teaching which carried His word into more intimate connection with human thought, and more varied application to human life.—*T. D. Bernard, M.A.*

d. Theology is the nurse of religion.

[12286] Admitting that the spiritual life is the highest revelation of the Spirit of God in humanity, we maintain that the food, the nourishment, the stimulant of that life in its highest forms, are religious truths in their most comprehensive and intensive expression; and life does not dispense with nor treat as no longer valuable the very truth and forms of truth on which it depends for its own vitality. Life is as dependent upon dogma as dogma is upon the revealing facts, upon the scattered though special truths of which it gives an account, and as (in the same way) these special revelations are dependent again upon the more general revelations of conscience, history, and nature.—*London Quarterly Review.*

e. Theology moulds religion.

[12287] The attitude of the soul towards God must be determined by what is known and believed about Him. Religion cannot therefore be separated from theology. Christian doctrine may be said to sustain the same relation to Christian character that the laws of sound do to music. You might as well demand the erection of a material structure without regard to the laws of mechanics, as expect to produce religious sentiments and feelings without religious convictions. The earth would not be clad with verdure, or bring forth its fruit, without the causative operation of certain physical laws: no more can moral and spiritual results be produced in human souls apart from rational means and influences. You cannot have emotions in the heart without ideas in the mind. Knowledge and conviction are motives to action. What is faith, or love, or devotion, without something and some one believed in and trusted? Christian character is therefore moulded on Christian truth. "Faith cometh by hearing; and hearing by the word of God." Our text, in announcing the completion of religious experience, gives also its natural and necessary order. First hearing, then knowledge: first religious conviction, then spiritual apprehension. "I have *heard* of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye *seeth* Thee."—*R. Milne, M.A.*

f. The victories of religion have been won by theology.

[12288] The victories of Christianity, wherever they have been won, have been won by distinct doctrinal theology; by telling men of Christ's vicarious death and sacrifice; by showing them Christ's substitution on the cross, and His precious blood; by teaching them justification by faith, and bidding them believe on a crucified Saviour; by preaching ruin by sin, redemption by Christ, regeneration by the Spirit; by lifting up the brazen serpent; by telling men to look and live, to believe, repent, and be converted.—*Bp. Ryle.*

7 To ethics.

(1) *The points of union and distinction.*

[12289] In dogmatics the relation between God and man is exhibited as an *existent* rela-

tion, whereas in ethics it is regarded as a relation still *future*, to be attained by the free efforts of believers. Hence dogmatics presents the Christian sense of God in its repose; ethics presents the same in its motion. This difference is, it is true, only relative, but it is yet of importance that these leading aspects of the general theme be kept apart, since otherwise the one may easily be supplanted by the other, especially the ethical by the dogmatical, ethical principles being treated only as supplements to the dogmatic principles, and not as being in themselves independent.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[12290] Dogmatics has to do with the doctrine of salvation, ethics with that of life; the first with the works of God, the second with the vocation of men; the one with the theoretical, the other with the practical side of truth. They are as certainly independent and yet as related as God and man.—*Van Oosterzee (condensed).*

(2) *The relation essential and organic.*

[12291] To expect to preserve the morals of Christianity while we deny the truth of Christian theology is like expecting to cut down the tree and to keep the fruit. If the Apostles' Creed is given up, the Sermon on the Mount and the parables will go too. Parodies of them are inexpressibly dreary; and to try to keep them alive by new ceremonies and forms of worship made on purpose, is like preparing ingredients and charms which would make Medea's caldron efficacious.—*Sir J. Fitzjames Stephen.*

[12292] Christian morality is Christian chiefly because it has a dogmatic foundation. What is peculiar in it arises from what is peculiar in the teaching of Christianity respecting God and man, and the relations between them. So absolutely is this true that it is impossible to separate the moral from the dogmatic teaching, or, in fact, to tell when the one begins and the other ends. The law of God as the supreme rule of duty is an organic part of the revelation of the nature of God. All conceptions of Christian duty, all specific rules of Christian conduct, are grounded on the Christian conception of God in Christ; and they can be no more divided the one from the other than a living tree can be divided from its own roots and its own branches. —*F. Meyrick, M.A.*

(3) *The mutual starting-point.*

[12293] The point of unity from which both dogmatics and ethics start as to their immediate source of knowledge is Christian experience or Christian faith.—*Dorner.*

(4) *The dogma motive for moral conduct.*

[12294] The connection between Christian doctrine and Christian morals is exhibited in the order of the subjects dealt with in each Epistle by St. Paul. First comes dogmatic teaching: springing out of that there follows the inculcation of morality. For example, in the early part of the Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul teaches the great doctrine of the adoption into the family of God. As a consequence of that doctrine, because Christians *are* the children of God, he warns them no longer to "walk, as the Gentiles walked, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them because of the hardness of their heart, who, being past feeling, had given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Eph. iv. 17–19), but to give themselves up to good works, to piety, purity, and love. The dogma is the motive for their Christian conduct.—*F. Meyrick, M.A.*

8 To science.

(1) *The objects and processes differ.*

[12295] Theology does certainly differ from other sciences, more particularly from the natural sciences. The object of these latter sciences is to discover truths; of theology, to maintain and apply them. The purpose of a physical science is to supply a remedy for the ignorance of man in respect to the subject of the science, and to compel nature more and more to yield up its secrets to the systematized observation of man. Patience on the part of the student is sure to be rewarded by the discovery of truths previously unknown. On the other hand, theology begins with the acceptance of all the essential truths with which it has to deal at the hands of revelation. It does not promise to the student the discovery of new truth as the reward of his study. Its language is that of St. Paul, "I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you" (1 Cor. xi. 23; see also 1 Cor. xv. 3, and Gal. ii. 2). Physical truths man can discover: mental laws he can find out by observing the process of the mind's action; but Divine things are above his ken; they are not discoverable by him; they are past his finding out. In technical language other sciences may by induction arrive at major premisses or universal principles, as well as deduce particulars from those principles, but theology has to begin with the major premisses which are supplied to it by revelation—that is, the dogmas of Scripture—justifying them, deducing from them consequential truths, and applying them when and where they require to be applied.—*Ibid.*

(2) *The training necessary for the one differs from the training necessary for the other.*

[12296] There is no mental power for which there is not as full range in theology as in science; none of which some of the best models may not be found among theologians; but, during pupilage, the general trainings are very different and their influence is rarely lost. The scientific student is encouraged to inquiry, guessing, and testing, the theological to acceptance of acknowledged truth; the one is assured that knowledge cometh with observation, the other that it does not all so come, and that much is given to him that will do the will of God; the one is guided to the exclusion of all sentiment and partiality, the other to such intense desire

for the honour of God and our Saviour as shall wish everything to be true that can minister to it.—*Sir J. Paget.*

(3) *The inferences drawn by one and the other are not always harmonious.*

[12297] When any doubtful thing is studied by both theologians and men of science—especially if it be studied by those who are by mind or education chiefly either the one or the other—their conclusions are often different. It is as if two groups of men, placed at stations wide apart, were to look into a dark room containing various strange objects, on which each group could throw from afar some light. The glimmerings of the various forms, lighted from their different lamps, could not seem alike to all; you would not expect the same descriptions from them all, much less the same inferences and reasonings on what they had seen. Similarly, when theologians pure and men of science pure study and reflect on any doubtful matter, it cannot but happen that the opinions of the one group should often seem to the other absolutely wrong and mischievous, wrong and incompatible with the truth.—*Ibid.*

(4) *The conflict between theology and science is mostly waged by incompetent reasoners.*

[12298] On each side many persons, and these not usually of the wisest, think it easy to judge and just to condemn the works of the most learned on the other side. This is, indeed, the way of the world; each man thinks it easy to judge in his neighbour's business. Mr. Darwin, for instance, endowed with a matchless power of observation, with the simplest and purest love of truth, with rare caution and rare power of reasoning on his facts, spends a long life in the study and interpretation of the ways of nature: he submits his facts and his beliefs to the scientific world; they are scrutinized and discussed, and approved by a vast majority of those who are able to judge them; and then some one with no more knowledge of natural history than may be gathered from popular lectures or magazines does not hesitate to speak of these beliefs as absurd, irreverent, subversive of the teaching of the Bible.

On the other side, Dr. Pusey or Dr. Westcott spends year after year in the study of theology, with all the helps of rare literary and linguistic knowledge, with keen analysis, deep reasoning and meditation, and with earnest longing for the truth; and some mere student of science, or one who, at most, has read a little theology at leisure times, thinks himself fit to decide that there cannot be good reasons for any of the beliefs which theologians such as these maintain and teach.—*Ibid.*

(5) *In this conflict neither side has been worsted by the other.*

[12299] Professor Huxley has said that "extinguished theologians lie about the cradle of every science, as the strangled snakes beside that of Hercules." But where is the proof? Athanasius was a theologian, but his view of the Divine Nature physical science does not affect, and subsequent theological science has in great measure endorsed. Augustine was a theologian, but his conception of man and his deepest needs physical science has corroborated rather than destroyed. Luther and Calvin were theologians, but their doctrines of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the religious experience of subsequent generations justifies, and modern science has not touched. Nay, more: these great theologians were pursuing religious truth in the scientific methods of their age when physical science was verily in its cradle, dreaming vain and foolish dreams or proposing childish and futile inquiries. Instead of extinguishing theologians as Hercules strangled snakes, science has always, like Cronos, devoured her own children. The Copernican theory of the universe extinguished the Ptolemaic; Sir Isaac Newton's doctrine of attraction extinguished Descartes' doctrine of vortices; astronomy extinguished astrology, chemistry alchemy, electricity magic; and recently the process has been repeated. In natural philosophy, the corpuscular hypothesis of light has been discredited by the undulatory hypothesis; in geology, the convulsionists have been devoured by the uniformitarians; and in natural history, evolutionists are attempting to dispose of the creationists, and the advocates of the theory of the transmutation of species to make short work of the advocates of the theory of the persistence and immutability of species. It would really be more exact to say, "Extinguished scientific teachers lie about the cradle of every science," &c.; for it is Cuvier and Agassiz, not Augustine and Calvin, that Darwin and Haeckel are strangling; and it is certainly M. Comte and Messrs. Congreve and Frederick Harrison, and not Archdeacon Paley and Bishop Butler, that Professor Huxley extinguishes. Theologians and theology may be largely benefited by physical science, they will not be extinguished by it; nay, rather they will be resuscitated. And may we not ask with all respect whether the scientific method was not first practised by theologians, and afterwards adopted with such great results by men of physical science? At all events, the kingdom of God had been entered in the spirit of the little child long before the kingdom of man was entered in the same spirit, and the theology of a thousand years ago is a much wiser and truer thing than the physical science of that same age.—*British Quarterly Review*, 1877.

(6) *Efforts have been made to close hostilities.*

1. By an impossible compromise.

[12300] The educated men of this generation appear very generally to go on to the conclusion that the things of science and the things of faith have no points of contact, and have absolutely nothing to do with each other. This conclusion is probably the more readily acquiesced in, because it affords a basis for a treaty of peace between what are regarded as the rival claims of religion and of science. Religious men and scientific men have often proposed a treaty of

peace on this simple basis, that each of the two should leave the province of the other alone. But it is, in the nature of things, impossible for such a treaty to be permanently observed ; and the attempt to observe it will continue only so long as neither party is quite in earnest. For, however unanswerable may be the proof that science has not, and cannot have, a theological basis ; yet no one who is really in earnest can rest in this conclusion as final. Every religious man believes that God is in all His creation ; he may therefore reasonably expect that those discoveries which reveal the structure of the universe, and the processes by which it has assumed its present form, will throw a reflected light, not perhaps on the Divine nature, but on the Divine government ; and if he is unable to see any such connection between the things of science and those of faith, his natural inference will be, not that there is no such connection, but that it is yet to be discovered. And every student of science knows that all scientific progress discloses new and unexpected relations between branches of science that formerly appeared to be altogether unconnected ; and why should he expect religion to be alone an exception? Whether the student of science is a believer or an unbeliever in religion—or, to use language which is less liable to the charge of ambiguity, whether he believes theology to be true or false—he ought to expect to find such a connection. If he believes it to be true, he ought to expect that the truths of science and the truths of faith will have much light to cast on each other ; if, on the contrary, he believes it to be false, or at least uncertain, his most logical conclusion will be, not that science has no bearing on theology, but that science will be found full of proofs of the untruth, or of the uncertainty, of theology.—*J. J. Murphy.*

2. By a recognition of the validity of mutual standpoints, and patient waiting for harmonizing discoveries.

[12301] Both sides are right in that which may be claimed as well-ascertained knowledge, and that distant inferences on one side should not be allowed to weigh against knowledge or great probability on the other. If it be maintained, as an inference from facts in science, that miracles are impossible, or a resurrection, or that God became man, so let it be : from the purely scientific point of view such things seem impossible. But from the religious point of view we may hold them to be not only possible but sure ; and the religious conviction has a right to be not less strong than the scientific. Let, then, each side hold firm by that for which there is clear evidence, whether it be of revelation or of science ; let both wait and work for the intermediate truths that will prove both to be in the main right ; let both be aware that the further they carry their inferences from what is known into that which is unknown, the greater is the probability of error and of controversy. Science cannot infer or define all possibilities ; theology cannot interpret all the truths of science ; on doubtful things they are nearly sure to disagree : they had better wait, not for an untying, but for the tying of the knot which shall combine their many truths in one.—*Sir J. Paget.*

3. By a recognition of mutual claims and effort for mutual understanding.

[12302] Each side has to recognize the claims of the other as standing for truths that are not to be ignored. He who contemplates the universe from the religious point of view must learn to see that this which we call science is one constituent of the great whole, and as such ought to be regarded with a sentiment like that which the remainder excites ; while he who contemplates the universe from the scientific point of view must learn to see that this which we call religion is similarly a constituent of the great whole, and being such, must be treated as a subject of science, with no more prejudice than any other reality. It behoves each party to strive to understand the other, with the conviction that the other has something worthy to be understood, and with the conviction that when mutually recognized this something will be the basis of a complete reconciliation.—*Herbert Spencer.*

(7) *Reconciliation should be urged from a threefold consideration.*

1. That of mutual solidity.

[12303] Science has a foundation, and so has religion. Let them unite their foundations, and the basis will be broader, and they will be two compartments of one great fabric reared to the glory of God. Let the one be the outer, and the other the inner court. In the one let all look, and admire, and adore ; and in the other let those who have faith kneel, and pray, and praise. Let the one be the sanctuary where human learning may present its richest incense as an offering to God, and the other, "the holiest of all," separated from it by a veil now rent in twain, and in which, on a blood-sprinkled mercy-seat, we pour out the love of a reconciled heart, and hear the oracles of the living God!—*J. M'Cosh, LL.D.*

2. That of mutual interest.

[12304] The departments of theology and science in many points overlap each other. Science takes cognizance of man ; his origin, nature, prerogatives, and powers. So does theology. The philosopher has no right to warn the theologian off this ground as a trespasser ; and the theologian has no right to put the philosopher under an interdict. Both have their rights. The field is common to both. They differ not as to the subject to be investigated, but as to the mode of investigation. Science seeks to learn what man is, by induction and analogy ; theology by revelation. Let each pursue its course independently yet harmoniously. Neither should ignore the other. It is not only unwise but unphilosophical for the man of science to conduct his investigations on

the assumption that nothing more than scientific facts can legitimately be taken into view. The horse is found in a wild state all over the American continent. What would be thought of the naturalist who should insist on determining the question of its origin, and the relation of its varieties, as a mere question of zoology? What would any man of sense care for his conclusions, if in contradiction to the known historical fact of its introduction by the Spaniards? or what would be said of the man who should undertake, on the zoological principles alone, to determine the origin and relation of the different tribes of Europe, ignoring all the lights of history?—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

[12305] The theologian has as much at stake in the scientific field as the physicist, and as much right to work in it. The physicist, if religion be a reality and a truth, is concerned in the theological field of thought, and his priceless interests are at stake in the use that the religious world make of religion. As the physicist is vitally concerned in the religious teachings and influence of the theologian, so the theologian is vitally concerned in the results of the speculations of the physicist. All these departments of truth overlap each other, and are inseparably and vitally connected. Neither party can erect a Chinese wall of exclusion of the other, and the enclosure of itself alone. All truth is but part of one interwoven, vitally connected, and mutually dependent whole.—*Clark Brodin.*

[12306] Far be it from a theologian to imagine that true science and true philosophy, pursued to the utmost limits of human powers, can be other than a real help to religious knowledge. Far be it from a Christian philosopher to doubt that however far he may be enabled to extend the borders of real knowledge in any department, there still needs the sacred cultivation of the immortal spirit in the revealed truths of God, in and by the Church, the body of Christ, the faithful reliance on the atoning blood of the Redeemer, and the cherished life of the Holy Spirit of santification in the heart of regenerated man.—*Bp. Moberly.*

3. That of mutual indebtedness and service.

[12307] I believe it possible to place religion on a scientific basis. But if this is true it does not follow that science contains the germ of religion. These expressions are metaphorical, and need to be explained; and they may be best explained by the analogy just referred to, of the relation of the laws of life to those of matter. Life presupposes matter; that is to say, there cannot be life unless there is matter to be vitalized, and the laws of life to a certain extent imply those of matter, and cannot be stated without presupposing them. But the converse is not true: there can be matter without life, and the laws of matter do not in any degree presuppose the laws of life. Thus matter constitutes a basis for life, and the sciences of matter constitute the basis for the sciences of life; but the germ of life is not to be found in matter; the vital forces are not resultants from the physical ones, and the properties of living things are not deducible from the properties of dead matter. As I conceive it, the relation of religion to science is of this kind: Science is the basis of religion, because supernatural truths imply natural ones, and cannot be stated without presupposing them. But science does not contain the germ of religion; on the contrary, the peculiar truths of religion are, as I believe, incapable of being discovered by man for himself, and have been communicated to mankind in an altogether peculiar manner, by revelation.—*J. J. Murphy.*

[12308] Theology runs in a sounder, steadier, more wholesome channel in the Christian world than it used to do in ancient times, and the human sciences have been made serviceable to advance the purposes of the gospel. Astronomy displays the magnificence, the glory, the power of our Creator: metaphysics help us to understand the spiritual essence of our souls, the dominion of Providence over free agents, the independence of the soul upon a corporeal frame for its existence: the study of man leads to the right understanding, and manifests the expedience of the doctrines and precepts delivered in Holy Writ: the study of Nature discovers the being of a God, and displays His stupendous wisdom conspicuous in the wonderful variety and regularity of our courses.—*A. Tucker.*

[12309] If our faith in God rests upon truth then any new step in advance in the scientific knowledge of nature must give us a new argument for its justification, must confirm it, strengthen it, and illustrate it; for if there is a God, in the religious sense of the word, then nature is of necessity His first and oldest revelation.—*Ulrici.*

[12310] Theology comprehends all other sciences as its tributaries, and with a generous reciprocity diffuses through them all a genial influence; it derives illustrations from all arts, and returns a singular and sometimes scarcely visible aid in the prosecution of all. The intricate and complex theory of law would be more clearly elucidated if our lawyers were better theologians, and their pleas would be more perspicuous and cogent if they were more fully based on the science of the God of equity. The structure of the human frame would be more thoroughly understood if our physicians were more conversant with the analogies which may be traced between the object so fearfully made and Him who so wonderfully made it; and they would practise with more safety and skill if their minds were more elevated, and their hearts more purified, by those principles which, though but faintly traced in all the emanations, are exhibited perfectly in the universal source. If theology renders such im-

portant service to other sciences and other arts, it must be pre-eminently serviceable to the science and the art of pulpit eloquence; and the preacher must feel that his success in preaching depends not on his graces of delivery, or his beauties of style, so much as on his enlarged and familiar acquaintance with the principles of religion.—*Prof. Park.*

9 To philosophy.

(1) *The relation discriminated.*

[12311] We have to consider the relation between dogmatic theology and philosophy. One thing is clear, that dogmatic theology is totally opposed to heathen philosophy which aims at arriving at truth by its own means. As Christianity entered into the world with a call to repentance and conversion, and with a doctrine drawn from a source totally different from philosophy, its necessary influence was, of course, to lead away from the wisdom of this world. But, having itself given birth to a new sum of knowledge, to a system of theology, the question arises whether there is room for a Christian philosophy alongside of Christian theology, and in what relation the two stand to each other? We take for granted at present that there is such a thing as Christian philosophy; we take for granted, further, that it is subject to the same fundamental conditions of knowledge as theology, that is, that it must start with the *credo ut intelligam:* but we distinguish between the former and the latter as follows—philosophy, even when Christian, is a knowledge of the universe, a systematic view of the world as a whole; theology is the knowledge of God.—*Bp. Martensen.*

(2) *Theology and speculative philosophy distinguished.*

[12312] *a.* They differ in their *objects.* Philosophy looks only to the intellect, and does not even attempt to supply the practical wants of the conscience, the will, and the affections. The faith, on the other hand, fixes itself at the central springs of the whole complete man, and, throned in the will and the conscience, throws its blessed beams over every part, diffusive and quickening as the sun in the natural heavens.

b. They differ in their *methods.* Philosophy relies upon deductions from ideas devoid of all external evidence, and speculatively conceived in the mind itself. Its authority is self—the human fallible self; and its conclusions are loose and indefinite as the authority whence they are derived. The faith, in its formal shape, consists of inductions from Divine facts, generalized from the inspired records by the process to which we are indebted for all the marvellous triumphs of natural science and art in modern times. The Divine facts are themselves divinely given, and free therefore from the fallibility attached to human observations even at their best. The dogmatic doctrines as formulated by the Church are no more than the scriptural truths in a technical statement. They therefore rest on the same authority—that is, on the authority of God. Hence they are clear, definite, positive, and unchangeable as their author.

c. They differ no less widely in the course of their *history.* The life of philosophy has ever been flickering and inconstant, blazing up into flame here and there, and then immediately dying away again. The life of Christian dogma was steadily progressive up to the Christian era. Then, under the special inspiration of our Lord and His apostles, it broke all at once into glory, rising to its zenith in a revelation containing all things necessary for salvation, and able to make the man of God "perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." From that zenith it has never declined.

No cloud has permanently interrupted that light; no progression of time or change has darkened its beams or enervated its quickening powers. It shines like the sun over a troubled sea. Schools of philosophy have been no more than the sea waves rising and falling again; but the everlasting sunbeams shine on and shine for ever, eternal and immutable as God.

d. They differ in their *results.* Philosophy has done little for the world. It has not one practical triumph to show. It has discovered no new truth, it has inaugurated no new principle, it has produced no new element of good. It cannot point to one of life's many evils either removed by its strength or alleviated by its influence. It has achieved no triumph of civilization, no trophy of human happiness. Were the whole swept away we should not lose any abiding or substantial benefit. Were all else swept away and it left alone, we should sink into absolute ignorance, and should not possess one fixed truth to elevate human nature by its dignity, or bless it by its beneficent influence.

The dogmatic faith has given us Christian civilization, with its national liberty, its pure morality, its lofty benevolence, its energetic activity and enterprise. This is its lowest effect. It reveals all we need to know; answers every question relative to ourselves and to the Unseen we need to ask; plants a new life within the soul itself; comforts every distress, brightens every joy, make life worth living, and then transforms death into the threshold of another and a higher state. All this it does because it is dogmatic. Take away the dogma, and you take away the Divine foundations, and in their absence the grand superstructure totters, shakes, and crumbles into ruin.—*E. Garbett, M.A.*

(3) *The character of the relation between true theology and sound philosophy.*

1. It is reciprocal.

[12313] Dogmatic theology enters into a reciprocal relation to philosophy. As the Church exists in the world, the mind of the Church must develop itself in connection with and relation to the culture and wisdom of the world; the relation of dogmatic theology to philosophy must be not merely a polemical relation, but also one of recognition; in other words, it must seek to appropriate and work up the elements

of truth, which every real system of philosophy contains.—*Bp. Martensen.*

2. It is helpful.

[12314] It is a very great gain for the student of theology to be enabled to meet not a few of her problems half-way, through having been previously exercised by them as problems in philosophy. Also, and especially, there is the great gain of not only disposition, but luminous power, to deal with properly theological matters in a properly philosophical manner; grasping and comprehending details in their principles, bringing principles to bear on comprehension of details. In this sense all our best theologians, all our really great theologians, have been philosophical; though not always through formal training of the schools, yet at least by a certain instinct of awakened nature, serving to them, in a sense not thought of by the poet, as "innate philosophy." Such was Dr. Chalmers in a high degree, while he certainly spoke plainly. Such, in a higher degree, was Jonathan Edwards, though he was a powerful reasoner rather than a great thinker. Such were John Owen, John Howe, Thomas Goodwin, and their illustrious compeers of various English schools. Such, almost in perfection, was John Calvin, in whom superlative speculative power, always effectively present, is always duly subservient to his purpose as a Christian divine. Such, most notably of all, was Augustine his precursor. In his marvellously interesting life, one of the most memorable things is the great place held by philosophy, by speculation deep and wide, not only before his great soul was won to Christ, but as a luminous power through his whole theological career. The moral thus far is, to the would-be theologian: be philosophical in your habit of thinking, to begin with, and to go on with to the end.—*Prof. James Macgregor.*

3. It is organic and harmonious.

[12315] It is here in this connection that we may see the relations of religion and philosophy. They interpenetrate, and nothing is less possible—nothing, were it possible, were more to be dreaded—than their severance and mutual isolation. Their fundamental truths are the same; the highest ideas and relations of the one are also the highest ideas and relations of the other. What in religion is felt and believed is in philosophy reasoned and known. Religion is intuitional and anticipatory philosophy; philosophy is reasoned and rationalized religion. There are, indeed, elements in religion that do not exist in philosophy—elements of emotion, awe, joy, trust, love, reverence; but while philosophy may be unable to create these, it is needed to justify and explain them. Yet, as similar truths similarly affect the mind from whatever standpoint approached, the one ever tends to pass into the other: religion in its highest moments to become philosophical; philosophy in its loftiest flights to become religious. The prologue to the fourth Gospel is as full of daring and exalted speculation as of devout and rapturous faith. Kant's splendid confession of the awe created in him by the two infinities, the starry heaven above and the moral law within, has as much of religious emotion as of philosophic meditation. The evangelist finds the secret and source of the divinest history in the very heart, as it were, of the Divine nature: God must be known if Christ is to be understood. The philosopher finds himself subdued into a most sublime humility, yet lifted into an inspired and most worshipful mood as the heaven perceived by sense widens into the universe represented to the imagination, and as the law declared by the conscience unfolds and broadens to the reason into the order that governs the world, the righteous will we call God. John's history were not divine without his philosophy; Kant's philosophy were not rational without his religion. The religion that does not rise into philosophy is but blind emotion, is piety without God; the philosophy that does not end in religion is but a withered rationalism, its reason is like an eyeless eye-socket turned towards the sun.—*A. M. Fairbairn, D.D.*

(4) *The liability to danger of this relation.*

[12316] In entering into such a relation to philosophy, theology is very liable to fall into an error—an error which made its appearance at a very early period of the Church's history and which constantly re-appears—the error, namely, of syncretism, of concluding a false concordat and unholy alliance with philosophy. The result of such an alliance has always been that theology has borrowed its light from philosophy, that a non-Christian was a substituted mode of looking at questions, and that to dogmatic theology might truly be applied the words, "*Aristotelem pro Christo vendere.*" We find an uncritical mixture of dogmatic theology and philosophy, for example, under various shapes in the works of the Alexandrian divines, where the categories of Platonism are frequently substituted for Christianity. The same experience was repeated during the Middle Ages in the case of divines under the influence of Aristotle. And we all remember how the categories of the modern Aristotle, Hegel, exerted a similar influence. These false modes of mediating, this show of effecting a reconciliation between faith and knowledge, reminds one of Augustine, who says in his "*Retractiones*," that during his Platonic period he found Plato in the gospel, and supposed himself, in this way, to have effected the reconciliation of religion and philosophy.—*Bp. Martensen.*

(5) *The relation of both to religion.*

[12317] Philosophy seeks truth: theology finds it, religion possesses it.—*Count Picus of Mirandola.*

XIV. Its Necessity.

1 The ground on which this necessity rests.

(1) *The constitution of the human mind.*

[12318] Such is the constitution of the human

mind, that it cannot help endeavouring to systematize and reconcile the facts which it admits to be true. In no department of knowledge have men been satisfied with the possession of a mass of undigested facts, and the student of the Bible can as little be expected to be thus satisfied. There is a necessity, therefore, for the construction of systems of theology. Of this the history of the Church affords abundant proof. In all ages, and among all denominations such systems have been produced.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

[12319] The human mind demands that we endeavour to systematize the facts which are attainable in any particular province, in order that we may learn more regarding the nature of those facts themselves, and also that we may assure ourselves of their correctness by applying the test of relative consistency. Now theological truths all treat of the truths of religion, and the unity of the religious idea can be gained only through a consistent construction of the manifold modes of its expression. And just in proportion as in the sphere of religion the list of facts which we possess is large and varied, and in proportion as the interests involved in them affect vital and important points, so here is the necessity for exact investigation and careful consistency the more decided and pronounced. If in the natural sciences the paramount importance of exact and scientific classification is everywhere acknowledged, thus specially must every one who accepts the reality of the facts of a religious consciousness, recognize the necessity for accurate distribution of those facts under the *schemata* of the general system. But yet, further, we should observe that it is utterly impossible to deal with any one isolated fact among our religious conceptions. The simplest form of religious truth cannot be treated of without involving a reference to other cognate truths. If, then, we are to speak of these truly, if we are to avoid misrepresentations of facts, the true order and concatenation must be recognized, and thus in the very simplest enunciation of Christian truth the idea of system is already necessarily introduced.—*J. Macpherson, M.A.*

2 **The ends for which this necessity arises.**

(1) *As regards religion itself.*

a The insufficiency of the religious sentiment without it.

[12320] If the religious sentiment be religion, and Church dogmas are only a human corruption of it, then the less dogma there is, the purer should be the religion. The more powerful, therefore, should be its influence, and the more beneficent its effects. In the lands where definite religious doctrine least exists, human virtue, happiness, and peace should flourish most. The more undefined and vague the religious impression, the purer must it be, and the higher should be the condition of its votaries. It seems absurd gravely to argue such a question, for the identity of savagism and superstition is proverbial. Yet if a common sentiment of religion without any dogmatic faith to give it definite direction, be the ideal of religion, and religion be confessed to be good, it follows by a most absolute necessity that the less dogmatic religion you have, the more virtue and happiness you ought to have. I am not sure that some are not prepared openly to avow and defend this conclusion so far as happiness is concerned, and even so far as morality is concerned, monstrous as it would be, and contradictory to the most positive evidence of facts. For look where we will, the less is the religious knowledge, the deeper is the general degradation. The course is downwards, not upwards. The tendency is not to a spontaneous activity, growing by its very luxuriance into definite systems of belief, but to an ever-deepening stagnation, losing what once it had or believes itself to have had. The result is not life, but torpor, silence, death.

But it may be urged that the fault in this case is not in the inability of the sentiment, but in the degraded condition of the mind. Well, we know of a civilization which was the growth of at least two thousand years. During the successive waves of empire that have swept over the world, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman, each inherited the advancement of its predecessor. Of the intellectual greatness of this civilization it is quite unnecessary to speak. Never has there been such a vigour of human genius as then, and never since, happily for the world, such a civilization.

Here, then, at all events, the religious sentiment had a fair field to display its powers. Certainly, on the intellectual side of it, ancient philosophy made a sweep of popular superstitions clean enough to satisfy any man. It stood just where modern thought, in its most advanced stage, stands at our own day. The ideas of the two periods and almost the language are identical. The foundation of all anti-dogmatic thought sounds in our ears as one of the most amiable of the ancients utters it: "The divine religion is something imperishable, but its forms are subject to decay." So wrote the gentle and philosophic Plutarch, quoting the ancient Greek tragedians. Yet what was the result when the religious sentiment thus worked clear of any embarrassing dogmas, and in the midst of the most voluptuous civilization ever known to the world? There followed its own loss of life in a universal scepticism; its absolute impotence in an incredible profligacy unfathomable by modern conceptions; its touching and pathetic wretchedness in a heart, sick even unto death, and crying out in the anguish of its desolation for some better hope and clearer teaching. From its depth of misery it looked and longed for the divine instruction modern philosophy contemptuously rejects, and pathetically mourned the ignorance and misery modern philosophy ostentatiously embraces.

The experiment of a religion without dogma has therefore been tried, and has failed. To

try it over again would be the wantonness of incredulity, if the circumstances of our day did not render the attempt impracticable.—*E. Garbett, M.A.*

[12321] It takes the form of love towards a being believed to be beautiful; or of fear towards a being believed to be terrible; or of trust towards a being believed to be kind and wise; or of cringing submission to a being believed to be cruel and severe. But in every such case the faith has become dogmatic, and the sentiment has moulded itself to the dogma. But suppose that the unseen world and the Supreme Being do exist, but are not known. The mind guesses at their existence and its modes; the sensitive soul gropes in the darkness and feels if haply it might find them. In this state the religious sentiment remains a sentiment only because the reality is not discovered. The absence of dogma is simply the absence of knowledge, and the indefinite sentiment of the heart is the expression of the ignorance of the head. Is ignorance good, and to be coveted? Is it the nursing-mother of progress and civilization? Is it the crown and climax of nineteen centuries of definite knowledge and positive revelation? But if religion be the sentiment without the dogma, this is the inevitable conclusion. Then, indeed, the sneer of the infidel is true, and religion altogether is but the superstition of the ignorant, or the idle credulity of the fool.—*Ibid.*

b. The dependence upon it of religious sentiment.

[12322] Devotional theology is the flower of which dogma is the root. For a while religious feeling may appear to be self-sustaining, but its seed is not in itself, and unless it renew itself continually from the roots of doctrine it will die. Our methods in religion may become too subjective. We may allow ourselves to say what we like and what we don't like in doctrine until half the wealth of revealed truth is practically neglected. Consciousness may be consulted too early and too often, in forgetfulness of the fact that the needs of human nature cannot be wholly estimated from that nature itself, even when regenerate. Let us not, then, be drawn from our allegiance to dogmatic truth by pietistic any more than by sceptical invitations. To build up churches on the basis of non-dogmatic teaching may seem at first to be the short way to great results, and a non-doctrinal piety may for a while reward and encourage the attempt; but when the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon that house it will fall, for it is founded on the sand.—*Prof. F. W. Macdonald.*

c. The dependence upon it of the very existence of religion, both objective and subjective.

[12323] Let Christianity abnegate the intellectual functions which are necessary in all other departments of thought, and it commits moral suicide. Without definition, Christian faith would evaporate into vague sentiment, or would become a dead system of disciplinary rules. Physical science aims at reducing to dogmatic and deductive form all its conclusions. —*British Quarterly Review*, 1877.

[12324] Religion cannot survive without a creed. The religious sentiment, deprived of its natural foundation in dogma, loses its definite shape, evaporates and dies. Love cannot exist without a knowledge of the character and qualities of the Being to be loved. Fear can possess no intelligent character without definite acquaintance with the object of fear, and the reasons why He should be feared. Gratitude springs from the sense of benefits received and from the contemplation of the generous benevolence of the Benefactor. Desire must be directed to a special object if it is to be real and operative. Worship is the expression of a recognized relation of dependent inferiority between the worshipper and the worshipped. Reverence and adoration can only be kindled by the consciousness of a Being competent to claim them by the glory of His attributes. In every case the affection is called out by some corresponding truth. The hand which sweeps away the truth necessarily strangles the affection.

It is necessary, therefore, in order to keep the religious sentiment alive and develop it into affection, to present religious truth in such a definite shape as the mind can grasp, the memory retain, and the heart appreciate, and at the same time to invest it with certitude. Yet more necessary is this in order to give the sentiment force and strength enough to control the passions, form the character, and regulate the conduct. All loopholes of escape must be stopped, and the conscience brought face to face with realities so sure and great as to abash, before their own majesty, the arrogance of self-will and the selfishness of self-indulgence. The dogmas of the Christian faith are invested to an extraordinary degree with both these characteristics. They are at once broad and simple enough for the comprehension of the most ignorant, and yet have heights and depths about them surpassing the grasp of the profoundest intellect. They come to the conscience invested with a Divine authority.—*E. Garbett, M.A.*

[12325] A religion without dogma is simply a body without bones, a bridge without abutments, without piers, without girders. Just as flesh can be conceived without a frame, a bridge without foundations, so can we conceive of a confession which has nothing to confess, a faith which has nothing to believe.—*Bp. Littlejohn.*

[12326] Separated from theology religion becomes naked theism. It may be an enlightened theism, compared to the belief of ancient times, for the unconscious influence of Christian truth has moulded men's modes of thinking, in regard to Divine things, too deeply to admit of its being shaken off. Thus the God of modern thought is not the terrible Deity

of ancient paganism or of savage idolatry in modern times, but distinctively a God of benevolence and love. The whole tendencies of modern feeling have thus far coloured our conception of the Deity, and the knowledge obtained of the marvellous adaptations of the material world have aided in transforming the frightful theism of ancient times into the beautiful and light-clothed angel of our own day. But this mode of feeling has itself grown up under the sheltering wing of Christian dogma, and has never existed to the full apart from it.

This theism has, moreover, an inevitable tendency to give less and less prominence to the personality of God in proportion as positive dogma relative to the Divine Being is more and more merged in subjective sentiment. It resolves itself in a great degree into pantheism; for prominent among the dogmas rejected as human perversions of the religious sentiment, is the belief in the supernatural. But what is called the supernatural is nothing more than the interference of the Divine Personality in the course of human things, modifying by His agency the operation of His own laws, just as man himself modifies them by his personal agency in every production of his skill, and every action of his life. In the place of personal action is substituted natural law, supposed to be constant and invariable, and therefore to supersede the possibility of a Divine interference.—*E. Garbett, M.A.*

(2) *As regards union with God.*

[12327] Such a union must depend either on intellectual conception, or on moral sympathy, or on both. But intellectual conception cannot exist where there is no knowledge of the facts of the Divine nature and character. Without the doctrines contained in the Bible we know nothing for certain of God. He may be a glorious Being, reposing idly from everlasting to everlasting in the abysses of His own sublime self-consciousness and never emerging into contact with human things. He may be a dreadful Fate, marching on His inexorable way utterly indifferent to the joys or sorrows of the individual men and women making up the great total of humanity. He may be a mere name for the sum of all things, an abstract idea of human creation. We know not. Having rejected all dogma, we are absolutely in the dark, and neither know anything for certain nor can know anything for certain. We have barred the very portals of the temple of truth against our own entrance, for directly we gain positive truths we get dogma, and are thus endlessly involved in the meshes of our own self-contradictions. There can be no intellectual conception where there is no definite notion, and there can be no intellectual contemplation where there is no intellectual conception.

Nor can moral sympathy survive, where there is no knowledge of the qualities of the Being with whom we are to sympathize. If we know nothing about God, His attributes may be shocking to us, and utterly alien from everything in ourselves, for aught we know to the contrary. If this cannot be, and we say such a Being cannot be our God, then we are slipping back into dogma again, although it be but a dogma of our own. We become creators of an ideal Being, and with Him we sympathize. That ideal is but a reflection of the intellectual and moral self. In other words, we sympathize with ourselves, not with God.—*Ibid.*

(3) *As regards the life of the church.*

[12328] Organized fellowship implies common interests, a common aim, some function in which the whole society visibly combines. The church is not merely the fellowship of Christian love—which requires no unity of organization—but the fellowship of Christian worship. The common worship of many individuals must be the expression in intelligible form of their common relation of faith towards God. The intelligent expression of faith therefore implies explicit and formulated knowledge. A church which ceases to theologize ceases in the same moment to grow; while conversely, from the constant action and reaction that connect knowledge and practice in all moral organisms, a church whose life grows dull will also cease to theologize aright. —*Prof. Robertson Smith.*

(4) *As regards the knowledge of the truth.*

[12329] No man can be a knowing lawyer in any nation who hath not well pondered and digested in his mind the common law of the world, from whence the interpretation, extensions, and limitations of all statutes and customs must be brought.—*Lord Stair*, 1681.

(5) *As regards the statement of truth.*

a. In the instruction of the young.

[12330] In the case of the young, how should the church fulfil its teaching office, except by catechisms and formularies? and what are catechisms and formularies but dogmatic presentations of the truths diffused in Scripture? No doubt it is said, and said aloud, that it is wrong to infix definite beliefs in the minds of the young—that it is only just to leave them to judge for themselves: but to this it has been answered that, as in morals, a child must acquire some principles, and the only question is, whether these principles should be good or bad; so in respect to religious truth, the only question is whether a young mind shall imbibe true or false opinions. The outcry against the prepossessing of a young mind with definite truths is, in almost every instance, insincere. An unbeliever educates his son as dogmatically as the most orthodox Christian—the only difference being that his dogmas are, for the most part, negative instead of positive.—*F. Meyrick, M.A.*

b. In homiletical teaching, with reference both to preparation and delivery.

[12331] Whatever may be the case with evangelists, and those who rotate from place to place, it is certain that preachers who look to permanence in their relation, and who are to seek the edification of the same people from year to

year, cannot do without full preparation, and thorough and patient investigation. They must be men of study as well as of prayer, and they should grow constantly in enlargement of mind; in strength and vigour of intellect, and facility in exhibiting the doctrines of the gospel. The possession and command of systematic knowledge will greatly aid the preacher in these respects. It will furnish him with materials, and teach him how to use them. It will enable him to bring assertions to their proper tests, and to expose and refute error. A preacher, therefore, should be always, in some measure, studying systems, in order to keep the relations and proportions of truth fresh in his remembrance.

Moreover, the study itself will give clearness to his conceptions and his expressions. Here often there is a great deficiency. The preacher fails to obtain distinct views of what he wishes to set forth; and, failing to comprehend it accurately, how can he exhibit it to others? What profit can be expected from the ministrations of one who fails here? If truth be thus covered with a veil, it cannot be seen in its sharp outlines and majestic proportions. A veiled statue pleases because it serves its purpose; the veil is the very element of its beauty. But a discourse enveloped within a veil, however transparent, answers the end neither of beauty nor of utility; and often, as with the statue, if you strike away the veil you have nothing left. Now the scientific study of theology will tend to secure the needful clearness, both by the discipline which it exacts, and by the orderly arrangement of our knowledge which it requires. It will enable the preacher also to speak with a higher authority, when he knows that what he speaks is in accordance with the great system of doctrines which God has revealed. Without the certainty derived from such systematic knowledge, he is in danger of becoming vacillating and feeble on the one hand, or, on the other, a rash and blind leader of the blind. He is either a bold adventurer on an unknown sea, risking by his incaution and ignorance the charge committed to him, and misleading those whom he professes to guide, or else he is always lingering amid the shallows only of gospel knowledge, afraid to launch out upon its mighty depths. The possession of system will also give variety and suitableness to the ministrations of the preacher, and help to teach him how to adapt the word in its various proportions to the wants of his hearers. He will become a wise householder, able to bring out of his treasures things new and old. If, indeed, preaching is simply a display of rhetorical pyrotechnics, or an exhibition of bold and startling assertions, if its purpose be only to amuse or astonish, then preparation for it is one thing; but if preaching be the solemn exhibition of God's truth in all its harmony; if it be rightly dividing the word, and the defence of it against error; if it be the right inculcation of duty in its precepts and various applications; and if the preacher is to do this for years, in the presence of the same audience—then the preparation for it is a different thing, and will require different training. And for this training the science of theology must always bear the principal part.—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review.*

[12332] Preaching should be distinctly dogmatic; not, indeed, always stating dogma, but implying it where not stated, and the plainest moral teaching should, after the example of St. Paul, be founded on Christian doctrine; and Christian doctrines should themselves be taught not here and there in a haphazard way, but systematically, according as each takes its place in the full circle of religious truth. Thus will be avoided the disproportion which arises from one or another favourite doctrine being unduly enforced, while others are left in the background, forgotten or neglected—a state of things which often paves the way for sectarianism and heresy. —*F. Meyrick, M.A.*

c. In missionary teaching.

[12333] For missionary teaching dogma is no less necessary than for the instruction of those who have been already admitted into the Church. A church which has no definite doctrines to deliver can have no missionary success. How could it substitute for the false systems which it has to confront an indefinite congeries of emotions, feelings, sentiments, opinions, hesitations? It must have truths to deliver—truths definite in character and delivered with authority, else it can and will have no effect upon the heathen faiths that it encounters. St. Paul's system—and St. Paul is the great example of a successful missionary—is dogmatic throughout. He states facts with respect to the nature and work of Christ, the love of God as shown in the mission of Christ and the adoption of mankind into His family, the gift of the Holy Ghost to man; and on these Divine facts, dogmatically enunciated, he builds his arguments and his eloquent appeals to those whom he would convert.—*Ibid.*

(6) *As regards preservation against scepticism.*

[12334] We once remember to have seen a fine vessel, which had drifted from her moorings, swept before the gale. Still dragging her ineffectual anchor along the bottom, the storm drove her fiercely on, until at length, in wild ruin, she lay a shattered wreck upon the rocks. It is not well, in matters of faith, to quit a safe and quiet anchorage, until assured that we can find rest in a more safe and constant haven.—*British Quarterly Review.*

XV. Its Services.

1 To the truth.

[12335] There are various uses which systematic theology serves in reference to the truth. When vague and mistaken ideas have gained ground as to the doctrines of the gospel, the scientific treatment of them brings them out again in precision and correctness. By unfolding the precise meaning of the forms in

which doctrines are received, doubts and mistakes are often removed, and the foundations again become settled. Such a service was rendered to the Church in the early centuries in reference to the doctrine of the Trinity. For when it became a topic of questioning, and there began to arise those heresies which must needs be, systematic investigation tried both opinions and words; and from the apparent clashing and confusion the doctrine was brought out, fully and roundly stated, to the general acceptance of the Church. We have reason to be grateful to the fathers and councils who so thoroughly investigated and settled the topics connected with it, and the forms in which it is expressed. Has anything been really added to it since? Has not the Church received, and will she not continue to hold, substantially the views then stated? But, in addition to this settling of doctrines, systems of theology also help to preserve them from generation to generation. It is difficult, if not impossible, to dislodge a whole system from the faith of the Church. Isolated and disconnected truths might be assailed with a greater chance of success, as is readily seen when they are embraced by those who otherwise hold to a false system. They are often unable to defend the very truth they embrace. On the other hand, erroneous doctrines, regarded singly, often have a plausibility and power which they lose when an attempt is made either to incorporate them into an established system of faith, or to construct a new scheme from them. They cannot be brought into harmony with one another, nor with the general analogy of faith. They must either be practically abandoned, or made the starting-point of new systems; in the attempt after which their advocates often grow weary and break down, or happily come to a better mind. Systems of theology and symbols of faith are therefore of use to conserve and maintain the truth. Some old creed may be the rallying-point of defence against error; for it is hard for Christians to break away from old forms of doctrine, and cast aside their attachment to them.—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review.*

2 To the Church.

(1) *It neutralizes a spirit of sectarianism.*

[12336] If anything will ever exorcise the spirit of small sectarian dogmatism, it will be the preaching of the great dogmas of the Church Catholic. It is in the back streams and eddies of sects and parties that these straws, and sticks, and froth of private opinion are always whirling round and round. The remedy is, not to dry up the stream of truth, but to deepen its channel and strengthen its banks. Do this, and the rush of its waters will soon sweep away these small disfigurements from its surface. — *Bp. Magee.*

(2) *It vitalizes its energies.*

[12337] The vital force of religious ideas becomes more energetic in proportion to their breadth and comprehensiveness, just in proportion, that is, as human intelligence proceeds to generalize, to reduce to the form of dogmatic principle, proposition, and apothegm, the previous revelations made in history, ritual, and song. Take, *e.g.*, the rapid progress in vital power of the faith of the Old Testament, when the later prophets began to condense and reduce to more definite and even dogmatic form the whole of the previous revelation. In the same way the martyr Church of the second and third centuries lived and thrived *pari passu* with the vigorous and abundant theologic zeal of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, and with their effort to think for themselves the deep mysteries of their faith, to grapple with the intellectual problem of dogmatic Christianity. The same experience has frequently been repeated. The Church has seldom discovered any considerable intensity of religious life without a corresponding development of dogmatic definition. The great formative periods of the Church have not been those which despised, but those which developed and systematized creed. The forging and diffusion of a theological term which has had a distinct hold upon history, and which adequately represents a group of religious ideas and true revelations, is often the starting-place of new, moral, and social forces of transcendent importance. The men who have had the greatest moral weight in the development of the Church, have been great dogmatic theologians, as, *e.g.*, Tertullian, Origen, Athanasius, Augustine, Hilary, Anselm, Gerson, Luther, Baxter, Rutherford, Edwards, Wesley. These have been great in the one direction, while and, it seems to us, because they were mighty in the other.—*British Quarterly Review.*

3 To the world.

(1) *Theology supplies the only adequate motive to Christian civilization.*

[12338] Christianity enlarges the area of motive, and widens it to the whole nature of man. In its absence civilization can only appeal to interest and self-love. But on this ground it is open to a retort apparently unanswerable. A man may reply, "I prefer my barbarism to your civilization. It suits my taste better, and on a deliberate calculation of gain and loss, I believe that I shall secure a larger amount of pleasure and enjoyment by a life of wandering idleness, and freedom from all restraint, than I shall by treading all my days the dull routine of respectable industry and order." No effective answer can be given to such a reply. If you tell him that the moral and mental pleasures he loses belong to a higher sphere and are better worth having beyond all comparison than the bodily sensations, he only retorts that he does not think so. If you talk to him about the dignity of his nature, he tells you that he does not care for it. As a question of merely human philosophy, he may not be far wrong; for we are creatures of habit, and many a sceptical school has been unable to find any firmer basis for morals than the instincts of nature, the *jus naturæ* of Spinoza. If in despair you urge that he owes it to his

fellow-men to sacrifice his own inclination to the good of the race, you only fall back on a plea, proved by experience to be as powerless against the active impulses of passion as a barrier of straw against the rush of a swollen river. Thus the human motive fails, simply because it does not appeal to the entire nature of man. But Christianity brings another and a mightier force. The dogmas of our created dependence, or responsibility, and of the resurrection, judgment, heaven and hell, at once enlighten conscience, and abash passion by the majesty of God and the tremendous issues of an eternity.—*E. Garbett, M.A.*

(2) *The difference between Christian and heathen civilization is traceable to Christian dogma.*

[12339] There are seven principles distinctive of the Christian in contrast with heathen civilization: the importance placed on the individual man; the mutual obligations of man to man; a jealous sensitiveness over human life and suffering; the conception of a moral and internal holiness; the sanctity of home; the religious equality of the sexes; and the identity of religious belief with religious practice. These are each and all referable to Christian dogmas, springing out of them as naturally as the branches out of a root, and exhibiting their characteristics as closely as the leaves of a tree follow the character of the tree. Now if none of these seven principles had any influence in heathen civilization, but are all characteristic of the Christian; if, when the corresponding dogmas were unknown, they were unknown, and wherever the dogmas have been preached they have become influential; if all the world over, wherever the gospel has been proclaimed, and under every diversity of race and climate the same teaching has been followed by the same effects, one conclusion only can follow. The differences distinguishing Christian from heathen civilization must be due to the difference of its principles; and these principles are the dogmas of the Christian faith. The conclusion is confirmed by the further fact that the activity of the influence is exactly proportioned to the activity of the dogmatic belief. That the character of our civilization has spread beyond the circle of believers in dogma, and leavens more or less the entire community, is most true. It would be strange indeed if it were otherwise. The widespreading influence of moral principles can no more be confined within a limited circle than the light can be confined to one portion of the firmament and excluded from the rest. But that among the believers of the dogmatic faith the distinctive principles of Christian civilization exist with the greatest intensity, admits of an easy proof. Count the charities of the Church of Christ—or rather they cannot be counted, for their number and extent, as they flow in ten thousand streams of benevolence throughout the length and breadth of the land, utterly defy calculation; then look to that portion of our community lying beyond and without the Church, and again count their charities, if indeed you can find them to count. I do not deny their existence, but certainly in contrast with the flow of Christian activity they are no more than the summer rill in contrast with the strong, deep river bearing navies on its breast.—*Ibid.*

(3) *Christian doctrine is an important part of the world's intellectual and moral wealth, and the source of much of its inspiration and culture.*

[12340] The Christian doctrines are, without doubt, an important part of the intellectual and spiritual wealth of the world. They may be misrepresented and caricatured by friend and foe, but they cannot be expelled from our hearts; they are here, in our midst, familiar subjects of our every-day thought; and their simple majesty and grace have often been confessed. The story of their growth and development is contained in a great body of literature, some of it of special, and, as we believe, supernatural origin, and all of it unsurpassed in purity and brilliancy, unparalleled in amplitude and range. The influence of these great doctrines and ideas is also undeniable. Society largely owes to them its refinement and cohesion, philanthropy its impulse, the course of civilization its progress and guidance. They have moulded the life and shaped the conduct of the best of men for more than a thousand years. Heroism has been kindled by their light, culture perfected by their discipline, character transfigured in their radiance. Poetry, music, painting, architecture, have sought their inspiration, and the great imperishable creations of genius show their affinity with the finest sensibilities of our nature. It is of the highest themes and the most inspiring hopes that Christian theology speaks; of the love of the heavenly Father toward the sinful and suffering children of men, and of that love preparing a people to conserve the law of righteousness and the knowledge of salvation, giving us at length, in Him who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person," a fuller revelation of Himself, and giving us also in His death redemption from sin, in His life the type of perfect humanity, in His resurrection the assurance and pledge of eternal blessedness.—*British Quarterly Review*, 1877.

XVI. Its Study and Exposition.

1 The limitations of human thought.

[12341] In order to obtain a full view of the limits of religious thought, and the circumstances by which these limits are determined, we must take into account three distinct considerations, which are equally indispensable to a correct and comprehensive explanation of the actual condition of man in relation to religious knowledge. The first is the finitude of our faculties, simply as creatures, and, in addition to this, the relative inferiority of our faculties as human creatures, when compared with higher orders of purely spiritual beings, endowed with

loftier capacities; the second is the measure of Divine manifestation which is vouchsafed to us, including both the amount of truth which is exhibited, and the kind of evidence with which it is accompanied; the third is the state, as distinguished from the constitution of our minds, or the condition of our intellectual and moral nature, as healthy or diseased, as depraved or rectified, as ruined or restored. Each of these considerations will be found to have an important bearing on our conceptions of religious truth, and none of them can be safely omitted in dealing with the objections of modern rationalism.—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 1850.

2 The implements employed in the study.

[12342] Let us glance now at the implements which the theologian is to employ in constructing his system from these sources. Here there is scope for the use of reason, and all the powers of the human mind. The system is to be built up from these materials; but it is to be by laborious industry, by patient research, and by riveted and conclusive logic. Scripture criticism is the main instrument. The principles of interpretation, principles which reason and common sense furnish, are to be applied to this book. Its true meaning is to be elicited in each passage, so far as light can be thrown upon it by the rules of exegesis, and by the investigations of science and learning. The history of the Church also gives help in constructing the science of religion. As it is a record of the history of doctrines; of the movements of the human mind in its investigations of the Scriptures, and its excursions into the regions of speculation; of the errors which have gained currency; and of the contests through which truth has passed, and the manner of her victory—it is of incalculable value to the theologian. He cannot afford to do without it. He cannot, in each successive generation, undertake his task as if none had ventured upon it before him. It is absurd to overlook the labours of others in the field of systematic theology; as absurd as for the devotee of any other science to set out upon his career of investigation with an absolute disregard of all that has been done by his predecessors. There have been giants in former days: how unreasonable to ignore the monuments of their skill, sagacity, industry, prayerful study, and success! Nor can the theologian afford to pass by, or to be ignorant of, the investigations and results in natural science of recent days. For he may use them, where they are well ascertained, to elucidate Divine truth, as well as to repel assaults which may be made from those quarters. So also the analogy of faith yields great assistance in the systematizing of Divine truth. It is not an infallible guide indeed, but only a subsidiary help, and yet a very valuable one. For whatever manifestly breaks the consistency and unity which must hold among the doctrines of the Scriptures, or is palpably inconsistent with the harmony of their system, has upon it the manifest mark of error.—*Ibid.*

3 The spirit in which the study should be pursued.

(1) *In a spirit of faith, humility, reverence, and love.*

[12343] To God the Father, God the Word, God the Spirit, we pour forth most humble and hearty supplications; that He, remembering the calamities of mankind, and the pilgrimage of this our life, in which we wear out days few and evil, would please to open to us new refreshments out of the fountains of His goodness, for the alleviating of our miseries. This also we humbly and earnestly beg, that human things may not prejudice such as are Divine; neither that from the unlocking of the gates of sense, and the kindling of a greater natural light, anything of incredulity, or intellectual night, may arise in our minds towards Divine mysteries. But rather, that by our mind thoroughly cleansed and purged from fancy and vanities, and yet subject and perfectly given up to the Divine oracles, there may be given unto faith the things that are faith's.—*Lord Bacon.*

[12344] I ask not, Lord, to attain to Thy height, with which my understanding is not compatible, but I desire in some measure to understand Thy truth, which my heart believes and loves.—*Anselm.*

4 Importance of the study.

[12345] I have argued for theology in a liberal education, first, from the consideration that, whereas it is the very profession of a university to teach all sciences, on this account it cannot exclude theology without being untrue to its profession. Next, I have said that all sciences being connected together, and having bearings one on another, it is impossible to teach them all thoroughly unless they are all taken into account, and theology among them. Moreover, I have insisted on the important influence which theology in matter of fact does and must exercise over a great variety of sciences, completing them and correcting them; so that, granting it to be a real science occupied with truth, it cannot be omitted without great prejudice to the teaching of the rest. And, lastly, I have urged that, supposing theology be not taught, its province will not simply be neglected, but will be actually usurped by other sciences, which will teach, without warrant, conclusions of their own in a subject-matter which needs its own proper principles for its due formation and disposition.—*John Henry Newman, D.D.*

XVII. Its Aim and Purpose.

[12346] The aim of dogmatic theology is to exhibit the "fundamental form of sound doctrine" in such a way that it may be a guide to the public proclamation of the gospel with due reference to the special circumstances and culture of any particular age. But besides this

practical end, dogmatic theology is also an end in itself. For though we allow the perfect justice of the foregoing remark of Melanchthon, so far as it relates to useless speculations, which have nothing to do with life, we still consider the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God to be in itself a good, and deem the knowledge of the glory of God to be a source of edification. Even if we make the acknowledgment that God's ways are unsearchable, this very knowledge of the Divine unsearchableness and the adoration of God's hidden wisdom will acquire greater force if we first traverse the path of human knowledge.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[12347] There is a common religious sentiment leading man to worship some unknown power. Theology seeks to answer the question, What is the power thus to be worshipped; what is the worship it requires?—*J. Iverach, M.A.*

[12348] The chief lesson and study in divinity is that we learn well and rightly to know Christ, who is therein very graciously pictured forth unto us.—*Luther.*

[12349] Theology is not a couch whereon to rest a searching and restless spirit, or a terrace for a wandering and variable mind to walk up and down with a fair prospect; or a tower of state for a proud mind to rest itself upon; or a fort or commanding ground for strife and contention; or a shop for profit or sale. It is a rich storehouse for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate.—*Lord Bacon.*

XVIII. Tests of the Verity of Christian Theology.

1 The Bible.

[12350] We are ever to bear in mind, that, as in science so in theology, it is not the system that gives authority to the fact, it is the fact that gives authority to the system. The astronomer who should say, I have reasoned out the true order of the universe, and by my theory must stand or fall all the laws of things on the earth, and all the motions of bodies in the heavens, would act a part not more absurd than would the theologian who should say, I have discovered what is and is not religion, and according to my scheme must stand or fall all the announcements of the Bible. It is his scheme which must be tried by the Bible, and not the Bible by his scheme. If his creed agrees not with the Bible's facts, it is because there is no light in it, or because the light that he believes to be in it is darkness.—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review.*

2 Experience.

[12351] The verification of our theological teaching must be looked for in the province to which that teaching belongs. The doctrines and truths of Christianity belong to the sphere of the religious life and to the experience of the spirit within us, and are to be tested and verified within the sphere with which they are concerned. Chemical properties may be established by experiment in the laboratory; historical facts are tested by the comparison of independent records; but spiritual things are spiritually determined and discerned. Religious doctrine has to do mainly with the life and experience, and can be verified only in the life and experience. The truth of our Lord's practical and spiritual teaching is tested only by actually putting it to the test; that is, making experiment of it, acting upon it in the life. It is for the religious sphere, and the conclusions of reasoning cannot determine its falsehood or truth. When our Lord says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light;" how shall we verify this saying? Will spectrum analysis yield any conclusions about it? Can it be analyzed by chemical process? Can we experiment upon it in the dissecting-room, or demonstrate it by mathematics? The only method of testing it is by taking that easy yoke and bearing that light burden; or by collecting the testimony of those who have done so. The larger number by far of the vital principles of the gospel are open to the same process of verification, and to no other. "If any man will do the will of My Father, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."—*British Quarterly Review*, 1879.

XIX. The Origin of Creeds generally.

1 The rise of error.

[12352] In the world a necessity arises—suppose a plague, or an epidemic—and the impulse is given to the physician to study a subject which had never before attracted attention. He is compelled to examine the symptoms, the progress, and the locality of the disease, and having learnt as much as he can of the nature of the complaint, to draw upon the resources of his art for the means whereby he may stay the progress of the angel of death. Or, again: population increases, and outruns the older modes by which food and clothing and locomotion were supplied; and the genius of man is turned to discover new applications of old resources by which food may be rendered more accessible, clothing made more abundant, and ourselves moved in greater numbers and with increased rapidity from one portion of the globe to another. Thus it has been in the history of the religion, in the working of the Church of Christ. It was a necessity, a hard, iron, unavoidable necessity, that made men in the times of Arius and Pelagius, of Tetzel and Voltaire, to search the treasures which the body of Christ has received, stored up in the Bible: the Spirit of truth always at work was especially working at times like those, leading the disciples of our Lord of later date further into the realms of

that truth, of which Christ possesses the master-key.—*C. A. Swainson, M.A.*

2 The need of an open confession of faith.

[12353] Creeds are due to ourselves, that we may honour the blessed God by open profession of faith; for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation;"—due to ourselves, that we may be fortified in the faith by that obligation which open and undeniable profession lays upon us, "witnessing a good profession before many witnesses." They are also due to others, whom we desire to draw to us, that we may approach them in our real characters, and, as it were, with our principles pinned upon our breast;—due to others, who deny our faith, that we may warn them of their errors, and exhibit the truth upon which we seriously believe the salvation of their soul depends. This was, in fact, the origin of creeds, even in the days of the apostles.—*Chamberlain.*

XX. Classification of the Church's Creeds.

1 The Ante-Nicene.

[12354] The rules of faith and baptismal confessions of the second and third centuries mark the transition from the Bible to the Œcumenical Creeds. They contain nearly all the articles of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and some are even more full, especially those of the East; for the Greek Church was, at an early period, disturbed by mutual speculations and perversions, and had a greater talent and taste for metaphysical theology than the less learned but more practical and steady Church of the West. They are as follow:—

Ignatius of Antioch, A.D. 107.
Irenæus of Gaul, A.D. 180.
Tertullian of North Africa, A.D. 200.
Cyprian of Carthage, A.D. 250.
Novatian of Rome, A.D. 250.
Origen of Alexandria, A.D. 230.
Gregory Thaumaturgus of Neo-Cæsarea, A.D. 270.
Lucian of Antioch, A.D. 300.
The Private Creed of Arius, A.D. 308.
Eusebius of Cæsarea in Palestine, A.D. 325.
Cyril of Jerusalem, A.D. 350.
Epiphanius of Cyprus, A.D. 374.
The Apostolical Constitutions, A.D. 350.

—*P. Schaff, D.D.*

2 The Apostles'.

(1) *Its origin.*

[12355] Rufinus mentions a tradition that after our Lord's ascension the apostles, when about to depart from one another, determined to appoint one rule of preaching that they might not set forth diverse things to their converts. Accordingly, they met together, and, inspired by the Holy Ghost, they drew up the Apostles' Creed, contributing to the common stock what each one thought good. The author of the sermons *De Tempore*, improperly ascribed to St. Augustine, tells us that "Peter said, 'I believe in God the Father Almighty;' John said, 'Maker of heaven and earth;' James said, 'And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord;' Andrew said, 'Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary;' Philip said, 'Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;' Thomas said, 'He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead;' Bartholomew said, 'And ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;' Matthew said, 'From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead;' James, the son of Alphæus, said, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church;' Simon Zelotes said, 'The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins;' Jude said, 'The resurrection of the flesh;' Matthias concluded with, 'The life everlasting.'" The principal objections to these traditions is (1) That the article of the descent into hell was not in the Roman (*i.e.*, the Apostles') nor in the Eastern creeds, and that those of "the communion of saints," and "the life everlasting," were wanting in the more ancient creeds. (2) The formation and existence of the creed is not mentioned in the Acts, nor in the more ancient fathers or councils. (3) The ancient creeds, though alike in substance, were not alike in words; which could never have been the case if one authoritative form had been handed down by the apostles. (4) The ancients scrupulously avoided committing the creed to writing; which would hardly have been the case if there was in the church so sacred a deposit as a creed drawn up by the apostles.—*Bp. Harold Browne* (*condensed*).

(2) *Its Biblical authority.*

[12356] Whether the apostles drew up this creed or not, every one must feel that it eminently deserves its title. It certainly is their creed; that is, it expresses the sum and substance of the apostolic writings. It is our Christian religion, given and presented in nineteen short sentences of very plain words. It is most wisely concise and simple; and yet, as a skeleton of New Testament theology, full and complete. It is the more to be admired that it expresses no man's opinion, it gives no man's explanation. It simply records the facts of our religion, without either accounting for them, or deciding in what particular manner they shall be held. Account for the facts as you may, explain them as you will, draw what inferences from them you like—these are the facts; and "they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture." As all Christians believe these facts, it would be a notable sign of the fundamental unity of the church if every congregation throughout the world would, as often as they meet together, stand up and declare aloud before God, before angels, before all men, and before devils, their personal faith in this ancient, comprehensive, and precious creed. Such an utterance of the Christian world, with

one accord, and from the soul, could not fail to attract the sympathy of heaven, of its innumerable angels and "the spirits of just men made perfect." Nor could it fail to abash hell and its powers of darkness.—*Dr. Pulsford.*

(3) *Its excellence.*

[12357] As the Lord's Prayer is the prayer of prayers, the Decalogue, the law of laws, so the Apostles' Creed is the creed of creeds. It contains all the fundamental articles of faith necessary to salvation, in the form of facts, in simple Christian language, and in the most natural order—the order of revelation—from God and the Creator down to the resurrection and the life everlasting. It still surpasses all later symbols for liturgical purposes, especially as a profession of candidates for baptism and Church membership. It is not a logical statement of abstract doctrines, but a profession of living facts and saving truths. It is a liturgical poem and an act of worship. Like the Lord's Prayer, it loses none of its charm and effect by frequent use. It is intelligible and edifying to a child, and fresh and rich to the profoundest Christian scholar, who, as he advances in age, delights to go back to primitive foundations and first principles. It has the fragrance of antiquity, and the inestimable weight of universal consent. It is the bond of union between all ages and sections of Christendom. It can never be superseded for popular use in church and school.—*P. Schaff, D.D.* (*condensed*).

3 The Nicene.

(1) *Its development.*

[12358] The Nicene Creed, or Symbolum Nicæno-Constantinopolitanum, is the Eastern form of the primitive creed, but with the distinct impress of the Nicene age. The terms ὁμοούσιος τῷ πατρί, πρὸ πάντων των αἰωνιών, θεὸς ἀληθινὸς ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθείς ουποιηθείς, are so many trophies of orthodoxy in the mighty struggle with the Arian heresy. We must distinguish the three forms of this creed. 1. *The Original*, promulgated at Nicea, A.D. 325, which closes with the words, "and in the Holy Ghost," but adds an anathema against the Arians. This was the authorized form down to the council of Chalcedon. 2. *The Nicæno-Constantinopolitan* form, which, besides some minor changes in the first two articles, adds the clauses after "Holy Ghost," but omits the anathema. It gives the text as now received by the Eastern Church. It is usually traced to the second Œcumenical Council, A.D. 381, against the Macedonians or Pneumatomachians. There is no authentic evidence of its Œcumenical recognition till the council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451. 3. *The Latin* or Western form differs from the Greek by the word *Filioque*, which, next to the authority of the Pope, is the chief source of the greatest schism in Christendom. The first trace of this word in the creed we find at the third council of Toledo, A.D. 589, to seal the triumph of orthodoxy over Arianism. During the eighth century it obtained currency in England and France, but not without opposition. The clause gained also in Italy from the time of Pope Nicholas I., A.D. 858, and was gradually accepted by the entire Latin Church, from whence it passed into the Protestant Churches. The Greek Church still adheres to the original form, and emphasizing the *monarchia* of the Father as the only root of Deity, teaches the single procession (ἐκπόρευσις) of the Spirit from the Father *alone*, which is supposed to be an eternal inter-Trinitarian process, like the eternal generation of the sun. The Latin Church taught the *double* procession of the Spirit from the Father and *the Son*, and without consulting the East put it into the creed.—*Ibid.*

(2) *Its excellence.*

[12359] The faith of the Trinity lies,
Shrined for ever, in those grand old words and wise;
A gem in beautiful setting; still at matin time,
The service of Holy Communion rings the ancient chime;
Wherever in marvellous minster, or village churches small,
Men to the Man that is God out of their nursery call,
Swelled by the rapture of choirs, or borne on the poor man's word,
Still the glorious Nicene confession unaltered is heard;
Most like the song that the angels are singing around the throne,
With their "Holy! Holy! Holy!" to the great Three in One.

—*Cecil Francis Alexander.*

4 The Athanasian.

[12360] This creed probably received its name because it sets forth so fully the Athanasian doctrine of the Holy Trinity. In the middle ages, and until the seventeenth century, it was almost universally believed to be the work of Athanasius himself. The progress of historical criticism showed this view to be untenable. Gerard Vossius—1642—in his book "De tribus Symbolis," opened the controversy as to the origin of this creed. Many learned critical treatises have since been written upon it. A compendious account of the criticism will be found in Bingham's "Antiquities." But Waterland's learned "History of the Athanasian Creed" is the standard work on the subject, and some of his principal conclusions are subjoined:—

1. Setting aside quotations from spurious works, the most ancient testimony to the reception of the Athanasian Creed is stated to be a decree of the Council of Autun, about A.D. 670.

2. The most ancient comment on this creed is ascribed to Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, about A.D. 570.

3. The earliest Latin MSS. of this creed are ascribed to the seventh century. The Greek MSS. are much later, few, and disagreeing with each other.

4. This creed was received in the Gallican

Church in the seventh, or perhaps the sixth, century, and in the Spanish Church about the same time. Charlemagne held it in high esteem, and in his days its use extended into Germany, Italy, and England. It was probably received by the Roman Church early in the tenth century. Waterland thinks it has been only partially received by the Oriental Churches.

5. A careful comparison of the controversial modes of expression devised to meet the several heresies on the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in the fifth and sixth centuries leads to the conclusion that the creed was composed after the Arian and Apollinarian heresies, and before the condemnation of the Nestorian and Monophysite opinions. It is also thought to have derived expressions from Augustine, "De Trinitate." From these data, the years A.D. 420–430 are assigned as including the probable date of its composition.

6. All the earliest notices of the creed point to Gaul as the country in which it was written and obtained currency.

7. Out of the Gallic writers in that age, Hilary of Arles (A.D. 430) is selected as the most probable author of this creed. What is known of his style, and his study of the works of Augustine, harmonizes with this supposition. It is also affirmed by the writer of his life that he composed an admirable exposition of the creed, which probably refers to this very document. For it was rarely called in ancient times *Symbolum* (as not emanating from a council), but rather *Expositio Catholicæ Fidei*, or some similar descriptive title.

The controversy now pending questions the dates of Waterland's chief authorities, and wishes to reduce the document to the age of Charlemagne. It also raises questions as to the mode of stating the equality of the Persons, and the accuracy of the English translation.—*T. P. Boultbee, LL.D.*

XXI. Distinction between Ancient and Modern, or between Symbolical and Confessional, Theology properly considered.

[12361] 1. The first and earliest distinction is to be found in the fact that the early symbols were the personal profession of faith, representing the characteristic of the man as he was a Christian man. This was the case especially with the Apostles' Creed, the parent and fountain of all innumerable subsequent confessions—unless, indeed, we carry their parentage higher and up to the baptismal formula in St. Matthew. As time rolled on, article after article was added for the contradiction of heresy; but its original use was not lost. It was the genuine "milk" for the babes of the Church, which was not withdrawn, even after the "strong meat" of the two later creeds was prepared for a more adult Christendom.

What the symbols were to the individual, the confessions are to the community. The former were binding on the members of the Church, the latter only on its ministers as the expounders of its doctrine. There is no modern formulary that has ever been imposed upon the individual as necessary to his communion with his brethren; but there are few which have not been more or less obligatory on those who have been entrusted with ministerial functions and responsibilities.

(2) The ancient symbols were, broadly speaking, notes of the unity of the Church; the modern confessions are, broadly speaking, again, notes of its necessary diversity. He, however, who entertains the rigid conviction that the variations in evangelical confessions are no other than the record of heresies that never should have existed, or of differences that are fatal to the unity of the Church, or of perversions of the simplicity of the faith that obstruct its diffusion, is without the first requisite for an intelligent study of symbolical theology. But studying in other and better principles, he will see that manifold corruptions of doctrine have never suppressed the glorious unity of the fundamental truth as it is in Jesus. He will see that the general history of the three centuries past has been on the whole a mighty vindication of original, Catholic Christianity. Nor will he value his own confession less, or hold to it less tenaciously, because he is constrained to admit that communities adopting other standards are carrying on the cause of the universal kingdom in a different style, as it respects subordinate matters, but with equal zeal, and an equal blessing.

(3) Another important difference is suggested by the fact that the ancient symbols were mainly designed to be incorporated in the worship of the Church, while the modern confessions are exclusively theological documents, deposited in the ark of every community as its standard of truth and protest against error. As to the ancient symbols, it cannot be denied that this service was bound up with their original design, and has been from the beginning their characteristic function. The modern Church has not constructed its formulas on the same principle; no new creed has been constructed to supersede in public worship the old ones; none have been devised to accompany them. The formularies, articles, and confessions of the later evangelical communities are theological documents, belonging rather to the teaching than to the worshipping service of the Church.

(4) Lastly, it must not be omitted that the modern confessions stand in relation to the early creeds as their necessary supplements, filling up their deficiencies, and so rounding them into the perfect fulness of Christian doctrine. Some such difference, indeed, may be observed to exist between those original creeds themselves: the exterior relations of the Trinity are not hinted at in the Apostles'; they are sharply defined in the Nicene; they are exhibited with all the exquisite refinement possible to human language in the Athanasian. But with the doctrines of the Trinity and the Person of Christ, or the Incarnation, the process of expansion ends. The mediatorial office

and ministry of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit, in the application of redemption to the individual, are scarcely indicated in any of them. Now where the ancient creeds are silent, the modern confessions are most copious and explicit. The nature and penalty and universality of sin, the expiatory sacrifice of Christ, and all that its operation and its defence demand, the righteousness of faith, with all its definitions and safeguards, the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures, the true characteristics and notes of the Church—the relation of the sacraments to the means, are *loci communes* of theology, which the ancient creeds touch lightly where they touch them at all.—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

XXII. Specimens of Theological Systems.

1 Those of different schools.

(1) *The Rationalistic.*

[12362] The rationalistic system starts from the reason as its centre, and more or less completely banishes the supernatural element from Christianity. Some rationalists deny even the supernatural origin of the gospel. Others, while they admit that Christianity is an immediate revelation from God, make its doctrines as little mysterious as possible. Matters of faith are brought, as much as may be, down to the comprehension of the human reason, and accomodated, as far as possible, to the desires of the human heart. According to this system, the moral state of man is but little affected by the fall, either as to his character or powers. The conditions of acceptance with God are acts of virtue; and the only assistance needed or granted is the moral influence of the truths and institutions of Christianity. These three points embrace the distinctive features of that system of rationalism, which, under the names of Pelagianism and low Arminianism, has so extensively prevailed.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

(2) *The High Church.*

[12363] This school of thought teaches that the sacraments, when properly administered, always convey grace to those who do not interpose the obstacle of mortal sin; and that it is only the sacraments, administered by duly authorized ministers, to communion with an Episcopal Church, which have this saving efficacy.—*Ibid.*

(3) *The Evangelical.*

[12364] The evangelical system teaches: 1. That all men, in consequence of the fall of Adam, are in a helpless state of sin and misery. 2. That the eternal Son of God, having assumed our nature, and having been made under the law, has brought in everlasting righteousness. 3. That this righteousness, with all the benefits of redemption, is freely offered to all men. 4. That it is by faith in Christ that we become united to Him, and that He dwells in us by His Spirit. 5. That all who, by the power of the Spirit of God, are thus united to Christ by faith, are partakers of justification, adoption, and sanctification, together with all the benefits which do, here and hereafter, either accompany or flow from them. 6. That union with the visible Church, and participation of the sacraments, are not the indispensable conditions of our union with Christ, neither are they the means of communicating, in the first instance, His benefits and grace, but rather the appointed means by which our union with Christ is acknowledged, and from time to time strengthened and renewed.—*Ibid.*

2 Those of leading theologians.

(1) *St. Augustine* (*patristic*).

[12365] Augustine, in his "Enchiridon," one of the patristic attempts at a system of theology, considers the whole of religion as consisting of three parts—faith, hope, and love; faith being expressed in the Creed, containing the *credenda;* hope in the Lord's Prayer, containing the *postulanda;* and love in the Ten Commandments, defining the *agenda* of the Christian: and this distribution, as it formed the basis on which most of the Christian catechisms have been constructed, may fairly be regarded as exhibiting, in a characteristic form, the ruling ideas of pre-Reformation theology.—*J. S. Candlish, D.D.*

(2) *St. Thomas Aquinas* (*scholastic*).

[12366] First Part. Introductory. Of God.

I. *Of God in Himself.*

1. Of God in the unity of His Being. (*a*) His existence proved. (*b*) His nature—one undivided, infinite, eternal. (*c*) His action. (1) Within—His knowledge, will, providence, predestination. (2) Without—His power. 2. Of God in the Trinity of Persons.

II. *Of God as the cause of all things.*

1. In the bringing of things into being. 2. Of the different kinds of things. (*a*) Of good or evil. (*b*) Of things. (1) Spiritual—angels, their nature, creation, fall. (2) Material—the work of the six days of creation. (3) Spiritual and material is one.—Of man, his body, soul, creation. 3. Of the government of all things by God. (*a*) Of the preservation of things in being. (*b*) Of their change. (1) By the action of God. (2) By their action on one another.

Second Part. Of the movement of the rational creature Godward.

I. *Of the end of man in the attainment of the beatific vision.*

II. *Of acts by which man reaches or is frustrated of his end.*

1. Of human acts in general. A. Of the acts themselves. (*a*) Of acts peculiar to man. Voluntary acts. (*b*) Of acts common to man and beast. Passions. B. Of the causes of human acts. (*a*) From within. (1) Capacities and powers of action. (2) Habits. (*b*) From without. (1) Guidance of laws. (2) Guidance of grace. 2. Of human acts in special. C. Of such as are common to every state of life. (*a*) Of the three theological virtues, and vices opposed to them: faith, hope, charity. (*b*) Of

the four cardinal virtues, and vices opposed to them: prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance. D. Of such as are peculiar to certain states of life. (*a*) Of special gifts and graces. (*b*) Of the active and contemplative life. (*c*) Of sundry positions and duties.

THIRD PART. Of Jesus Christ, and the way to God opened up through Him.

I. *Of Jesus Christ.* God and man.

1. Of the incarnation. 2. Of the consequences of the incarnation. 3. Of the life of Christ.

II. *Of the Sacraments*, instituted by and dependent on Jesus Christ.

1. Of the sacraments in general. 2. Of the sacraments in special. (*a*) Of baptism or spiritual birth. (*b*) Of confirmation or spiritual manhood. (*c*) Of the eucharist or spiritual food. (*d*) and (*e*) Of penitence and extreme unction or spiritual medicine. (*f*) Of orders, for the spiritual government of men. (*g*) Of matrimony, for the spiritual life of the family.

III. *Of the resurrection*, which we obtain through Christ and the end of all things.—*W. J. Town* (*condensed*).

(3) *Dr. C. Hodge* (*Calvinistic*).

[12367] As science, concerned with the facts of nature, has its several departments, as mathematics, chemistry, &c., so theology, having the facts of Scripture for its subject, has its distinct and natural branches. 1. *Theology proper*, which includes all that the Bible teaches of God; of the threefold personality of the Godhead, and the relation of God to the world in creation and providence. 2. *Anthropology*, including the origin and nature of man; his original state and probation; his fall; the nature of sin, and the effect of Adam's first sin upon himself and his posterity. 3. *Soteriology*, including the purpose or plan of God in reference to the salvation of man; the person and work of the Redeemer; the application of redemption to the people of God in their regeneration, justification, and sanctification, and the means of grace. 4. *Eschatology*, *i.e.*, the state of the soul after death; the resurrection; the second advent; the general judgment and end of the world; heaven and hell. 5. *Ecclesiology*, the idea or nature of the Church; its attributes, prerogatives, and organization.—*Syst. Theol.* (*condensed*).

(4) *Dr. W. B. Pope* (*Arminian*).

[12368] Christian theology exhibits the whole compass of Divine truth, whether as presented in Scripture forms, or as moulded by ecclesiastical development, or as dogmatically stated in its results. It treats first of the Christian religion, and of its documents as the *Divine rule of faith:* including the topics of revelation, inspiration canon, with such exhibition of the credentials or evidences of the faith as are consistent with the strictly dogmatic character of our course. This is the necessary introduction to the supreme doctrine concerning *God:* His being, essence, names, and attributes. The consideration of these subjects will lead to the relations of *God and the creature.* Then follows the doctrine concerning *sin:* its origin, nature, and universality. The *mediatorial ministry of Jesus Christ*, His person, and His work, as objectively finished on earth and in heaven, next demands attention, leading to the *administration of redemption*, including personal salvation, the ethics of the gospel, and the institutions of the Christian Church. All is closed by the doctrines pertaining to the *last things.*—*Compendium of Christian Theology.*

XXIII. THE HOSTILITY TO CHRISTIAN DOGMATIC TEACHING ON THEOLOGY.

1 Its prevalence.

[12369] For some years amongst most Christian people, except, perhaps, one very select but not very large section, there has been a deep distaste for theology, an often and variously expressed prejudice against it. In the student-days of men not yet old, not a few ministers of different religious communions, who had passed through a college training, might have been heard thanking God they had never studied theology. In those same years not a few disparaging remarks might be read in popular literature as to the value of the study; and its uncouth and scholastic terminology was not unfrequently held up to ridicule. Indeed, a common feeling seemed to be that to which Faust, in his restless dissatisfaction with the knowledge he had acquired, gave utterance:

"Now have I fully master'd, by hard toil
And zealous study, all philosophy;
Whatever law and medicine can teach,
And to my sorrow, too, theology;
Yet here I stand, poor fool, with nothing more
Of real wisdom than I had before."
—*British Quarterly Review.*

[12370] Present tendencies are dead against theology. More religion, or better, more morality; but at least no more dogmatics—these are among the shrillest cries which for the nonce pierce our firmament. Things have vastly altered. Time was when theology reigned the grand monopolist, absorbing all sciences, everywhere uplifting itself as the suzerain to whom all other studies bent the knee, by whose spirit every branch of research was dominated. Trains of centuries appear, in which one queenly figure is seen inspiring, controlling, engrossing human genius. Through the long avenue of generations, stretching from Augustine to Abelard, theology is in the main the arbitress in all inquiry. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say with Guizot that the theological spirit is "the blood which ran in the veins of the European world down to Bacon and Descartes." It is quite within the truth to affirm with him, that at least "from the fifth to the twelfth centuries it is theology that possessed and directed the human spirit."

But days have come of a naturalistic rather than a theological temper, not of stagnation

(God be thanked!), but of intellectual intoxication, in which many a disintegrating force is at work on old beliefs. The ancient moulds into which faith's intelligence once was cast are passed again through the crucible. All doctrines are called to maintain themselves in the face of powerful and persistent assault. It is theology now that has to beg its bit of bread, and humbly crave its little corner, fearing that there may be found for it no room in the inn.

There has been something of Nemesis in the change. It cannot be concealed that theology has been at times too much of a despot and usurper. There have been whole eras in which it has hardened into a corset, encasing and cramping man's free intellect. Too rapidly its quickening periods of genial revival have congealed into a frigid, biting dogmatism. Too often it has made more of its own dead forms than of the living Christ, whom it is its glory to present to the quick appetencies of faith. For neither party could it ever have been good that theology and science should occupy relations under which the former became mistress and the latter slave, the one (to use the familiar metaphor of Leibnitz) the imperious Sarah in possession of the house, the other the humiliated Hagar, driven forth with her Ishmael when she dared to hint revolt. The retribution which follows the failure entailed by over-largeness of promise, and punishes the arrogance that claims the whole where but the part is due, has in some measure entered.—*Prof. S. D. F. Salmond.*

2 Its grounds and causes.

(1) *Unbelief.*

1. Unbelief necessarily creates in all in whom it exists a hostility to Christian dogma.

[12371] Undogmatic Christianity is something vague and indefinite in its shape and form. Assault it and it is gone, leaving only a vacant space where it used to be; or at least it is a material so soft and yielding that it does no injury to its assailant. But this is not the case with dogmatic Christianity. Dogma has added bone and muscle and hard corners to what was but just now so rounded off and ready to give way like an elastic cushion. Unbelief does not like so hard-fisted an antagonist, and cries out against dogmatism, when it really means Christianity. Dogma is equally offensive to the unbelief which is unacknowledged, of which the unbeliever is himself half unconscious. It is not difficult to persuade ourselves that we believe in, or at least do not disbelieve in, vague and undefined images roving through the cloudland of imagination; but when these images are transformed into shapes and definite outlines, when sentimental dreamings are translated into categorical propositions, a man is obliged to make up his mind—he must either assent or dissent, he must believe or refuse to believe; and this is just what he does not wish to do. He is therefore irritated against the dogmas which demand from him the resolution of difficulties which he would fain have left unresolved, and the acceptance or refusal of important truths which he wished neither to accept nor reject. It is irritating to such a man to hear the Church recite, in the unimpassioned tones of full assurance, the baptismal creed, or the Nicene symbol, and still more the triumphant song of the Athanasian Creed. Objecting in truth to the clearness and precision of the statements in those documents, he assails them as incomprehensible, and as dealing with matter unintelligible to human faculties; and probably ends in betaking himself to some more pliant communion where he is not compelled to realize all that is involved in the name of God, nor pressed too closely with the question whether he believes in a personal God at all.—*F. Meyrick, M.A.*

(2) *The audacity of modern thought.*

[12372] The young thinker of the present day looks with quiet scorn or pity on the straight-laced timidity of previous generations. To him at least nothing shall serve as a barrier. Man is the measure of all things, and the opinions of men who lived in former ages are intended to be corrected, improved upon, modified, or abandoned by those who stand upon their shoulders or are heirs of their wisdom. If the laws of the mind would permit it, a thoroughgoing disciple of this school of thought would question that a triangle is formed of three straight lines, that two and two make four, or any other mathematical or metaphysical axiom, simply because such axioms have been hitherto universally accepted by mankind. The laws of his mind not permitting him to deny the truths assumed or proved by the exact sciences, he takes his revenge on those sciences which, not beginning with self-evident axioms, seek to effect conviction by appealing to probability instead of to demonstrative evidence.—*Ibid.*

(3) *The positivist aversion for the inscrutable.*

[12373] Before the anti-dogmatist should determine to reject "dogma," he should look nearer home, and inquire whether his sense perceptions do not propound for him even greater contradictions. The conception of "matter," "force," or "atom," is now as difficult to reason and to faith as is the dogma of the incarnation when that great synthesis first comes before the intuitions of the spiritual nature. If an effort is made to *think* out the conditions of any concrete molecule of the universe, we find it the awful seat of infinitely numerous variations of force, the very throne of the Eternal Power, a palace-temple of the Personal God. The Catholic dogma of the Person of Christ is not a whit more perplexing and bewildering to the scientific imagination than is any honest attempt to put into words the truth about a particle of dust or an infinitesimal spermatozoon. To sustain and establish the long and encyclopædic aggregation of properties and energies in the one case, we have the accumulated experiences of the senses, manipulated, classified, measured, by the scientific faculties of men; but in the other case there are the sharp spiritual

experiences of untold myriads brought also to a focal point of baffling splendour. Theology has no monopoly of mysteries. When both are thoroughly searched, Christian dogma is not one whit more transcendental than what goes by the name of scientific truth.—*British Quarterly Review*, 1877.

XXIV. The Dangers to which Doctrine is Liable.

[12374] 1. A doctrine is liable both to suffer from without and from within. From *within it is exposed to the risk of decomposition by analysis.* When it has been launched into the ocean of our public intellectual life, it is forthwith subjected, as a condition of acceptance, to the play and scrutiny of many and variously constituted minds. The several ingredients which constitute it, the primary truth to which it appeals, and upon which it ultimately reposes, are separately and constantly examined. It may be that certain elements of the doctrine, essential to its perfect representation, are rejected altogether. It may be that all its constitutive elements are retained, while the proportions in which they are blended are radically altered. It may be that an impulse is given to some active intellectual solvent, hitherto dormant, but from the first latent in the constitution of the doctrine, and likely, according to any ordinary human estimate, to break it up. Or some point of attraction between the doctrine and a threatening philosophy outside it is discovered and insisted on; and the philosophy, in a patronizing spirit, proposes to meet the doctrine half way, and to ratify one half of it if the other may be abandoned. Or some subtle intellectual poison is injected into the doctrine; and while men imagine that they are only adapting it to the temper of an age, or to the demands of a line of thought, its glow and beauty are forfeited, or its very life and heart are eaten out. Then for awhile its shell or its skeleton lies neglected by the side of the great highway of thought, until at length some one of those adventurers who in every age devote themselves to the manufacture of eclectic systems, assigns to the intellectual fossil a place of honour in his private museum, side by side with the remains of other extinct theories, to which in its lifetime it was fundamentally opposed.

2. But even if a doctrine be sufficiently compact and strong to resist internal decomposition, it must in any case be prepared to encounter *the shock of opposition from without.* To no doctrine is it given to be absolutely inoffensive; and therefore sooner or later every doctrine is opposed. Every doctrine, however frail and insignificant it may be, provokes attacks by the mere fact of its existence. It challenges a certain measure of attention which is coveted by some other doctrines. It takes up a certain amount of mental room which other doctrines would fain appropriate, if indeed it does not jostle inconveniently against them, or contradict them outright. Thus it rouses against itself resentment, or, at any rate, opposition; and this opposition is reinforced by an appetite which is shared in by those who hold the opposed doctrine no less than by those who oppose it. The craving for novelty is by no means peculiar to quickwitted races like the Athenians of the apostolical age or the French of our own day. It is profoundly and universally human; and it enters into our appreciation of subject-matters the most various. Novelty confers a charm upon high efforts of thought and inquiry as well as upon works of art or of imagination, or even upon fashions in amusement or in dress. To treat this yearning for novelty as though it were a vicious frivolity is to overlook its profound significance. For, even in its lowest and unloveliest forms, it is a living and perpetual witness to the original nobility of the soul of man. It is the restlessness of a desire which One Being alone can satisfy; it reminds us that the Infinite One has made us for Himself, and that no object, person, or doctrine that is merely finite and earthly, can take His place in our heart and thought, and bid us finally be still. And therefore as man passes through life on his short and rapid pilgrimage, unless his eye be fixed on that treasure in heaven which "neither moth nor rust doth corrupt," he is of necessity the very slave of novelty. Each candidate for his admiration wins from him, it may be, a passing glance of approval; but, unsatisfied at heart, he is ever seeking for some new stimulant to his evanescent sympathies. He casts to the winds the faded flower which he had but lately stooped to gather with such eager enthusiasm; he buries beneath the waves the useless pebble which, when his eye first detected it sparkling on the shore, had yielded him a moment of such bright enjoyment. Nothing human can insure its life against the attractions of something more recent than itself in point of origin; no doctrine of earthly mould can hope to escape the sentence of superannuation when it is fairly confronted with the intellectual creations of an age later than its own. A human doctrine may live for a few years, or it may live for centuries. Its duration will depend partly upon the amount of absolute truth which it embodies, and partly upon the strength of the rivals with which it is brought into competition. But it cannot always satisfy the appetite for novelty; its day of extinction can only be deferred. — *Canon Liddon.*

XXV. The Effects of Good and Bad Doctrine contrasted.

1 As regards God.

[12375] Superficial views of sin and grace, and of the whole circle of Christian doctrine, always involve low conceptions of the Divine law, and, sooner or later, of God its Author.—*C. Hodge, D.D.*

2 As regards the individual.

[12376] Religious doctrine is the measure and sum total of the motives which a religion can

bring to bear upon character. If the doctrines are false or immoral, they will form perverted or defective characters; if scanty, they will have little effect on character; if merely metaphysical and not ethical, they will have no effect on character whatever. It has been claimed by the friends of Christianity that it is intensely practical that its grand truths or doctrines, especially those which are connected with its grand facts or history, have a direct and most healthy bearing on human life, that it contains enough of truth to finish human character on all its sides, and that, when believed, it actually forms characters of the highest excellence.—*Prof. G. T. Ladd.*

3 As regards society.

[12377] A faith strengthens and exalts a people in the degree that it is pure, weakens and depraves in the degree that it is corrupt. History unfolds a wonderful tale to him who has eyes to read it. In India a few thousand Englishmen hold empire over more than two hundred millions of men. The Hindu and the Briton face each other as aliens in blood and speech. Yet, long centuries since, their and our fathers were brothers, lived under the same heavens, watched the same stars rise and set, tilled the same field, worshipped the same gods. Wealth and culture came to them ages before they came to us. While our fathers dwelt in the German forests, serving in their own wild way their own fierce gods; when Rome was still unbuilt, and the Latin tribes dreamed not of universal dominion; when the song of Homer was still unsung, and the clang of Greek arms was yet distant from the walls of Troy, the Hindus had settled, conquerors, in their splendid Indian land, and were singing under its brilliant stars and beneath its burning sun their ancient Vedic hymns. Yet how, with that long start on the way to the higher civilization, do they and we now respectively stand? Are not the Aryan cities on the Thames and the Clyde the mistresses of the Aryan cities that stand beside the mightier and more majestic Indus and Ganges? And why? Why has the Hindu declined in power as he grew in multitude, while the late-born Teuton has widened "with the process of the suns" till his culture and his commerce clasp our globe like belts of golden sunlight, though dashed here and there with bands of great and terrible darkness? The faith of the Hindu grew like an iron band round his spirit, became a social system, fatal, inflexible, full of false sanctities and consecrated falsities, from which even death would not allow him to escape; but there came to the Teuton in his brawny and untutored youth a gentle faith, yet strong as gentle, and it moulded him with its soft yet plastic hands, shaped him to new and nobler purposes, breathed into his society a purer spirit, larger ambitions, and loftier aims. And so, while the Hindu feels as if held in the dread bonds of fate, revolving in the cycle of a being that is joyless in its very joys, the Teuton knows himself a son of God, a brother of man, a free and conscious person, sent by Divine love to make earth happier, by Divine righteousness to make man holier. And so the one has stood fixed "in patient, deep disdain" of change, but the other is ever called by his faith to give glory to God in the highest by creating on earth peace, and among men goodwill.—*A. M. Fairbairn, D.D.*

PART II.

THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

PAGE

DIVISION A.—THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GOD ... 284

DIVISION B.—THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY 290

DIVISION C.—THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF CREATION 320

PART II.

THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

DIVISION A.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GOD.

SYLLABUS.

		PAGE
I.	Derivation and Meaning of the Term God	284
II.	Origin of the Idea of God	284
III.	Scriptural Assumption of the Existence of a Perfect God	284
IV.	The Christian Doctrine of God	284
V.	Position of the Doctrine in Dogmatic Theology	285
VI.	History of the Doctrine of a Divine Being	285
VII.	Intuitive and Necessary Proofs of the Being of God	286
VIII.	The Names of God...	287
IX.	Definitions of the Nature of God	288
X.	The Attributes of God	288

PART II.

THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

DIVISION A.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GOD.

I. Derivation and Meaning of the Term God.

[12378] God, from the same Saxon root as good, thus beautifully expressing the Divine benignity as the leading attribute of the most generous term for the Deity, and corresponding almost invariably to two Hebrew words, both from a common root—אוּל, *ul*, to be strong.

II. Origin of the Idea of God.

[12379] The true account would seem to be this: We have no innate ideas, and therefore no innate idea of God. We are, however, so constituted that the mind has this idea as soon as it acts. As in the material sphere, when the eye opens, it sees the light; so in the spiritual sphere, when the mind opens, it sees God. There is no conscious process of reasoning. This seeing, therefore, is an intuition. But the sight or idea of God thus gained is only initial. It is alike too indefinite and too limited. There are needed now the inductions of reason from the facts of the universe, and the still ampler testimonies of revelation, to widen out this initial idea to its proper form and fulness, and to clothe the Great First Cause with all the attributes of the uncreated, living, intelligent, holy, and infinite God.—*Dr. Willis Lord.*

III. Scriptural Assumption of the Existence of a Perfect God.

[12380] The Scriptures attempt no formal proof that there is a God. Their first sentence *assumes* it. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The immense force and fulness of this initial Scripture are admirably shown by Dr. Murphy on Genesis, as follows: "It assumes the existence of God, for it is He who in the beginning creates. It assumes His eternity, for He is before all things; and, as nothing comes from nothing, He Himself must have always been. It implies His omnipotence, for what but this could create? It implies His absolute freedom, for He begins a new course of action. It implies His infinite wisdom, for a cosmos, an order of matter and mind, can only come from a Being of absolute intelligence. It implies His essential goodness, for the sole, eternal, almighty, all-wise, and all-sufficient Being has no reason, no motive, no capacity for evil." . . . Why God in Revelation should assume rather than prove the one great fact essential to all religion we are not informed. It may not have been becoming, certainly it was not necessary, that God should stoop to prove that He exists who is the absolute ground and reason of all existence, as though it could be questioned. Has He not the reason, no perverseness of the will, no defilement of the conscience, no depth of moral corruption, can utterly efface from human minds the dread thought of God? Must not that which is so clear, so irresistible, so universal, be intuitive? The point is not whether we get thus our completed idea of God. Most certainly we do not: that comes from instruction and reasoning. But do we not thus get the primary and germinal thought, out of which a true logic may evolve the full idea?—*Ibid.*

[12381] In Scripture no attempt is made to prove the existence of a God. The end of men consisted not in denying a God, but in admitting too many, and one great object of the Bible is to demonstrate there is but one.

IV. The Christian Doctrine of God.

1 Christian theism alone gives us a just representation of divinity.

[12382] It precedes and surpasses reason, especially in the disclosure of the depths of fatherly love which are in the heart of the infinite Jehovah; but it nowhere contradicts reason—nay, it incorporates all the findings of reason. It presents as one great and brilliant light all the scattered sparks of truth which scintillated among the darkness of heathendom; it combines into a living unity all the separate elements of positive truth to be found in systems like Pantheism, Deism, Rationalism; it

excludes all that is false in views lower than or contrary to its own. Whenever it maintains a truth regarding God, reason finds that it is defending a principle of Christian theism; whenever it refutes an error regarding Him it finds itself assailing some one of the many enemies of Christian theism.—*Prof. Flint* (*condensed*).

[12383] God is a Spirit, God is love, God is Lord. These statements include the idea of an immaterial, intelligent, and free personal Being, of perfect goodness, wisdom, and power, who made the universe, and continues to support it, as well as to govern and direct it by His providence.—*McClintock and Strong.*

[12384] The eternal, independent, and self-existent Being; the Being whose purposes and actions spring from Himself without foreign motive or influence; He who is absolute in dominion; the most pure, the most simple, the most spiritual of all essences; infinitely benevolent, beneficent, true, and holy; the cause of all being, the upholder of all things; infinitely happy because infinitely perfect and eternally self-sufficient, needing nothing that He has made; illimitable in His immensity, inconceivable in His mode of existence, and indescribable in His essence; known fully only to Himself, because an infinite mind can only be fully comprehended by itself. In a word, a Being who, from His infinite wisdom, cannot err or be deceived, and, from His infinite goodness, can do nothing but what is eternally just, and right, and kind.—*Adam Clarke.*

[12385] The Christian doctrine of God in its development involves the idea of the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

V. Position of the Doctrine in Dogmatic Theology.

[12386] A system of theology at once evangelical and scientific must of necessity open with a discussion of the idea of God. It cannot fairly be objected that by thus beginning we set out with that which is furthest removed from us, or that we deal with abstract principles before coming to concrete details and practical truths. The theologian does not attempt to construct any philosophical theory of an absolute essence; but the God of whom he speaks is the living personal God who creates man, and relates Himself to His creature. It is with the idea of this God, whose works of creation, providence, and redemption are afterwards to be unfolded, that the systematic theologian must commence.—*J. McPherson, M.A.*

[12387] The doctrine of God has not invariably been the starting-point of Christian theology. Melanchthon started from man's free-will, the Heidelburg Catechism with man's misery, the Groningen School with Christ. Nevertheless this method is favoured by—

1. *The nature of the case.* If there is really a God then He can be nothing less than the Alpha of all our science. Not in man, but only in God, is found the standard of the highest truth. All other points stand in relation to this as planets to the sun. He who is the foundation of all things must be the key to all, or He is not the personal, the living God.

2. *The word and spirit of Holy Scripture.* Here the Old Testament expressions in Psa. xxxvi. 9; Jer. ix. 23, 24; Job xxviii. 28, come under attention. According to Jesus' own word (John xvii. 3), in the knowledge of God is eternal life. On this account Paul also begins with God in Acts xiv. 17, xvii. 26–28; Rom. i. 18, &c. Dogmatics does well to follow this example, and to make Him known as He has revealed Himself in and through Jesus Christ.

3. *The phenomena and wants of the age.* At the Reformation it might appear uncalled for, because in this domain there was hardly any controversy. But in our own time all other controverted questions are governed more or less by the conception we form of God. And now that atheism, pantheism, and naturalism have become such terrible powers we have hardly any choice left but to begin here. And further, the highest that the science of faith declares, *e.g.*, concerning sin and grace, remains for the majority an absurdity so long as Christian theism has not been well determined.—*Van Oosterzee* (*condensed*).

[For counter theories to the Christian doctrine of God, see Vol. I., Section I., Division E.]

VI. History of the Doctrine of a Divine Being.

1 Extra Biblical and philosophical.

[12388] The recognition of a personal and superintending Deity traceable doubtfully in Thales, and distinctly taught by Anaxagoras, became again dubious in Archelaus. The affectionate morality and piety of Pythagoras degenerated into the superstitious mysticism of the later Pythagoreans. The clear and lofty theism of Socrates, his recognition of virtue, and his perception of the true dignity of human nature, passed through Plato into the disputative scepticism of the Academy. The emphatic protest of the Eleatic School against a gross and materialistic polytheism, and its distinct consciousness of the unity and spiritual nature of God, became secularized in Parmenides, and atheistic in the sceptical sophistry of Zeno and the ascetic dualism of Empedocles. The pleasure-loving school of Aristippus ended in the sullen discontent of Hegesias, the death-persuader. The recognition of the inductive basis of all human knowledge belonging to Euclid of Megara, evaporated in the idle sophisms of Eubulides and Diodorus, and the logical fallacies of Stilpo. The idealistic philosophy of Plato, with its strong resemblances to revealed doctrine on the subject of God and the soul, and sin, and the other life, died out in Polemo and Crates in one direction, in the sceptical uncertainty of Archesilaus in a second, and in the probabilities and lax morality of Carneades in the third.

The philosophy of Aristotle, pure if cold, and elevating if selfish, ended in the materialistic atheism of Strato. The rigid self-control of Antisthenes became an extravagance in the severity of the Cynics and the sullen pride of Diogenes. The natural virtue of Zeno passed into the subtle negations of Chrysippus. The principle of Epicurus, that pleasure was to be found in virtue, was turned by a play of words into the principle which has made Epicurean a name of reproach throughout the world. The craving of the Alexandrian School after union with God was developed into the impious mysticism of Plotinus. Even the philosophy of Locke was perverted into the materialism of Hartley, Priestley, and Darwin, the sensationalism of Condillac, the selfishness of Helvetius, the fatalism of D'Holbach, and the naked atheism of the French encyclopædists. Lastly, the idealism of Descartes prepared the way for the blasphemies of Schelling and Hegel.—*E. Garbett, M.A.*

2 Christian.

[12389] When the earlier Fathers attempted formal proof of the being of God it was usually either from conscience (Justin, 150), or else from the witness of the material universe to its Creator (Minucius Felix, 228). Mere artificial proofs were unknown at that early period ; and, indeed, by such profound thinkers as Clement of Alexandria (218) and Origen (254) its demonstration without the aid of revelation was deemed impossible. Nay, Arnobius (325) thought it almost as impious to prove it as to deny it. But the downfall of Paganism in the fourth century necessitated a different kind of Christian apologetic. Belief in the old gods perished, and a general tendency towards universal scepticism set in. It became thenceforth a favourite problem to demonstrate philosophically the existence of the Most High ; not, however, without protest from such as Athanasius (373) and Gregory Nazianzen (391), to whom such demonstrations appeared irreverent. Diodorus of Tarsus (384) argued that as everything in the universe is subject to change, and change itself must have had a beginning, there must have been before that beginning a self-existent author of change. This argument was afterwards more fully developed by John Damascene (750). Augustine (430) propounded a very abstruse metaphysical proof from the existence of general ideas. Boethius (524) suggested that the idea of imperfection points directly to a perfection which must needs be realized in God. The arguments of Augustine and Boethius were established with philosophical precision by Anselm (1109) ; they were the delight of the schoolmen, and were yet further elaborated by Descartes (1650). Arguments of a more practical character were also adduced by the schoolmen. Hugh of St. Victor (1141) stated a simple form of the cosmological argument. Abelard (1142) and Raymond of Sabunde (1350) after him found evidence for a supreme ruler in the dictates of conscience. But Duns Scotus (1308) and Occam (1327) held that these lines of proof, however practically sufficient, did not amount to actual demonstration. The revival of classical learning in the fifteenth century was followed by a contemptuous rejection of the entire scholastic philosophy, and in Italy, at least, by an outbreak of atheism. Savonarola (1498) met this with the argument from the universal consent of mankind. This method was also employed by Grotius (1645). The argument from design seems to have been first systematized by Boyle (1691) ; it was popularized by Ray (1705), further elaborated by Dereham (1714), and perfected by Paley (1794). Meanwhile it was felt that no effort to establish a strictly philosophic proof had hitherto been quite satisfactory. In 1704, however, Samuel Clarke advanced his celebrated *à priori* argument. But after the outbreak of pantheism, materialism, and undisguised atheism in the latter half of the eighteenth century, Kant (1804) undertook to expose the weakness of *all* metaphysical proofs. He attached more importance to the argument from design. Schleiermacher (1834), Coleridge (1834), strove to prove the being of God from "the feeling of absolute and universal dependence." In our own day a new school of scientific apologists has arisen to meet the assertions of atheistic evolutionists. Their task is to show the failure of evolution to account for the origin of life.—*T. G. Crippen* (*condensed*).

VII. Intuitive and Necessary Proofs of the Being of God.

[12390] He who reflects upon himself reflects upon his own original, and finds the clearest impression of some eternal nature and perfect being stamped upon his own soul.—*Plotinus.*

[12391] God has so copied forth Himself into the whole life and energy of man's soul as that the lovely characters of divinity may be most easily seen and read of all men within themselves ; as they say Phidias, the famous statuary, after he had made the statue of Minerva, with the greatest exquisiteness of art, to be set up in the Acropolis at Athens, afterwards impressed his own image so deeply in her buckler that no one could delete or efface it without destroying the whole statue. And if we would know what the impress of souls is, it is nothing but God Himself, who could not write His own name, so as that it might be read, but only in rational natures.—*John Smith, of Cambridge.*

[12392] Whence came rational ideas of space, time, causation, and infinity, and abstract ideas of numbers and forms, as in arithmetic and geometry, and the wonderful development of mathematics as seen in its higher and abstract departments? Whence came the artistic capacity and feeling in music, painting, and sculpture? The masterpieces of painting and sculpture, whence came the power that produced them? The productions of Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn, and Handel and Haydn? The masterpieces of architecture? Whence

came they all? Whence came instrumental and vocal music? Whence came the power of the human voice in speech and singing? A Solon, a Solomon, a Daniel, a Plato, a Milton, a Shakespeare, a Bacon, or a Newton, with all their wonderful powers of mind and soul, whence came they? Weigh well the aspirations, doubts, hopes, speculations, reasonings, and discoveries of such a soul! Consider well its amazing powers of apprehension, reason, comprehension, sorrow, joy, and despair! Think of its incalculable obligations and responsibilities of good and evil! Then ask, whence came all this wonderful power, this wonderful form of life so divine?—*Clark Braden.*

[12393] It has been said that a man cannot lift his hand to his head without finding enough to convince him of the existence of a God. And it is well said; for he has only to reflect, familiar as this action is, and simple as it seems to be, how many things are requisite for the performing of it; how many things which we understand, to say nothing of many more, probably, which we do not; viz., first, a long, hard, strong cylinder, in order to give to the arm its firmness and tension, but which, being rigid and, in its substance, inflexible, can only turn upon joints: secondly, therefore, joints for this purpose, one at the shoulder to raise the arm, another at the elbow to bend it, these joints continually fed with a soft mucilage to make the parts slip easily upon one another, and held together by strong braces to keep them in their position; then, thirdly, strings and wires, *i.e.*, muscles and tendons, artificially inserted for the purpose of drawing the bones in the directions in which the joints allow them to move. Hitherto we seem to understand the mechanism pretty well; and, understanding this, we possess enough for our conclusion; nevertheless, we have hitherto only a machine standing still, a dead organization, an apparatus. To put the system in a state of activity (to set it at work) a further provision is necessary, viz., a communication with the brain by means of nerves. We know the existence of this communication, because we can see the communicating threads, and can trace them to the brain; its necessity we also know, because, if the thread be cut, if the communication be intercepted, the muscle becomes paralytic; but beyond this we know little, the organization being too minute and subtle for our inspection.

To what has been enumerated, as officiating in the single act of a man's raising his hand to his head, must be added, likewise, all that is necessary, and all that contributes to the growth, nourishment, and sustentation of the limb, the repair of its waste, the preservation of its health: such as the circulation of the blood through every part of it; its lymphatics, exhalants, absorbents; its excretions and integuments. All these share in the result, join in the effect, and how all these, or any of them, come together without a designing, disposing intelligence, it is impossible to conceive.—*Paley.*

[For arguments and proofs of the Divine existence treated at length, see Vol. I., Section I., Division C (2).]

VIII. The Names of God.

[12394] The three principal names of God in Holy Scripture are Elohim and Jehovah in the Hebrew, and Theos in the Greek. Various others, such as Adonai, Elion, El-Shaddai, Despotes, Kurios, are also used, but with less frequency. The former are at the same time the more distinctive and the more comprehensive. Elohim is the plural of Eloah; and this springs from El. Some demur at this, because of a slight irregularity in the etymological process. Beyond any reasonable question, however, El is the true root of Eloah and Elohim. The specific idea it presents is that of strength or power. As a name of God, therefore (passing now its intimation of plurality in unity), Elohim means the Powerful Being. Accordingly, this name is chiefly used when God appears in His creational and providential acts and relations. Elohim created the universe. Elohim upholds and governs the universe. Elohim is the Being, august, majestic, almighty; the object of supreme reverence and awe. Let the whole creation bow before Elohim! Jehovah is a composite word, from Havah=to be. According to Bengel, it takes its form from three of the tense forms of the verb from which it comes, the past, present, and future. The specific idea which it contains is that of existence or life. As a name of God, therefore, Jehovah means the I AM or the Living One. "It is strictly and absolutely the proper name of God, and is never given to any other being, imaginary or real" (Wilkinson, p. 82). From the tenses blending in its form, it has the special potency brought out in the notable periphrasis of the Apocalypse for Him "which was, which is, and which is to come," or the Being existing from eternity to eternity. In the usage of the Scriptures, and as compared with Elohim, Jehovah has this distinction that, while Elohim exhibits God in His acts and relations of creation and providence, Jehovah is seen especially in the sphere of grace and redemption. Jehovah is the God of the promises and of the covenant. Jehovah makes known His will to men in the supernatural revelation. Jehovah comes down to men by a real though ineffable incarnation. Not unto men, not unto angels, but unto Jehovah belong the power and glory of salvation.—*Dr. Willis Lord.*

[12395] The Greek word Theos forms the third principal Scripture name of God. Plato suggested its derivation from the verb Theo= to run; "because the first Gods were the Sun and Moon always running in the sky." Tertullian (Ad Nationes, II. 4) dismisses this derivation as ingenious but absurd. Before Plato, Herodotus wrote of the Pelasgi: "They called the Gods Theoi=Disposers; because they had disposed and arranged all things in such beautiful order." (II. 52.) According to this thought,

Theos comes from Tithemi=to place, arrange, or dispose of things, events, and persons. As a name of God, therefore, who is over all, Theos would mean the supreme Arranger or Disposer.

This etymological result is so congruous with the Biblical view of God, that one would love to adopt it. But this would seem to be impossible. Theos, though Greek in form, is not so in origin. This same word, with only formal variations, exists in the Greek, Latin, Sanscrit, and perhaps the Old German, as the name for God; thus, Theos, Deus, Deva, and Tues, or Tuis. Its root, therefore, must be one common to all these languages, existing in that prior tongue from which these arose. Possibly, of this group of sister languages, the Sanscrit may be so much the oldest as itself to furnish the root in question. Some scholars think they find it in an old form, Div; which, they say, means to be bright or to shine. According to this view, Theos, as a name of God, would mean Him who is Light.

None of these principal Scripture names of God point directly, and of their own force, at His moral nature and attributes. Doubtless they imply them. The presence of any one Divine factor argues the presence of all. At the same time our full and complete conception of God, the Perfect Being, is to be drawn, not from any single and separate part of either nature or revelation, but from their related and aggregate testimonies. To make this induction is one of the great ends of theology.—*Ibid.*

[For further treatment of this subject, see Section XII.]

IX. Definitions of the Nature of God.

[12396] God is Absoluta Vita=Absolute Life (Oetinger). The Being who destinates all (Nitzsch). The Being who has the ground of His existence in Himself (Wolfe). The absolutely perfect Being, and the cause of all other being (Knapp). The first three of these definitions rest on some single Divine quality or function, and are too condensed to be sufficiently clear. Of the whole number, that of Knapp seems the best: "The human mind, not only by reason, but even by a sort of natural instinct, holds him to be God who exceeds all and excels all" (Recog. Clem. B. IV. ch. 2). The objection of Kant to the definition of God as the most perfect Being, that it does not express His moral perfection, is scarcely valid. A description of God should express all His essential qualities, but it is sufficient for a definition clearly to imply them. A possible ambiguity in the formula of Dr. Knapp would be removed by these terms; God is the absolutely perfect Being and the original cause of all other being. Relative perfection and mediate causation may pertain to creatures: absolute perfection and original causation belong only to God, and distinguish Him from all creatures. The test of analysis or of synthesis will show that this definition contains all we can rightly express or conceive concerning Him. If it includes more than we can fully conceive, we may remember that terse sentence of Albertus Magnus, in "Summa Theologiæ," 2, 13, viz.: "Deus cognosci potest, sed non comprehendi;" *i.e.*, God can be known, though not comprehended.—*Ibid.*

X. The Attributes of God.

1 Their nature.

[12397] In general, any quality, faculty, or perfection which may be ascribed to God is a Divine attribute. More definitely, the attributes of God are those essential qualities, faculties, or perfections which make Him to be what He is; without which He would not be God; and which, either in their kind or their degree, distinguish Him from all creatures.—*Ibid.*

2 Their relations.

[12398] The attributes of God are the analysis of His being, and His being is the synthesis of His attributes. The relation between them, therefore, is that of a whole to its parts, and of the parts to their whole. Each Divine attribute is, to that extent, the Divine Being; and the aggregate of the Divine attributes is the sum of the Divine Being. The relation of the Divine attributes to one another is less within our apprehension. They are all one and the same, some theologians have ventured to say. The difference suggested by the terms which designate them is not real, but only ideal: it pertains to our conceptions, and not to that of which we conceive. Turretin seems to have aimed at a middle path when he said that the Divine attributes are distinguished, not *realiter*, but *virtualiter*—not really, but virtually.

This view cannot be admitted. It conflicts with the necessary convictions of men, and is dishonouring to God. We should deny not only our common sense but our deepest consciousness, in identifying our own knowledge and power, and making the difference between them not one of reality, but only of conception. When, however, we deny consciousness, we deny truth. Besides which, if God has eternity, omniscience, almighty power, and perfect truth, holiness, and love, only by reason of our conception of Him, then, surely, it is not He who is Divine, but we. Our thought invests Him with what, otherwise, He has not. The truth is, God is just what He has revealed Himself to be in His Word and His works. His attributes are real in themselves and in their distinction from one another, just as are the attributes of men. Indeed, we find in these a true though dim analogy to those "The perfections of God," said Leibnitz (Pref. Theod.), "are those of our own souls, but He possesses them without limit. He is an ocean of which we have received only a few drops. There is in us something of power, something of knowledge, something of goodness; but these attributes are in their entireness in Him."—*Ibid.*

[For individual treatment of the Divine attributes, see Section XIII.]

PART II.

THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION B.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

SYLLABUS.

		PAGE
I.	Explanation of Certain Terms employed in Dealing with this Doctrine ...	290
II.	The Economical History of the Doctrine	292
III.	The Ecclesiastical History of the Doctrine	293
IV.	The A Fitioque Question, or the Controversy between the Eastern and Western Churches	294
V.	Definitions and General Summaries of the Doctrine	295
VI.	Tests to be applied to Definitions of the Trinity	295
VII.	The Church's Teaching as to the Doctrine of the Trinity	295
VIII.	The Connection between the Church's Teaching and that of the Scriptures touching the Trinity	299
IX.	Nature and Characteristics of the Doctrine	299
X.	Adumbration of this Doctrine in Heathen Mythology	301
XI.	Scripture Proofs of the Doctrine	301
XII.	Confirmation of the Doctrine by Arguments drawn from Human Reason ...	304
XIII.	Confirmation of the Doctrine by Arguments drawn from the Religious Consciousness	305
XIV.	Illustrations of the Trinity...	306
XV.	Importance and Practical Efficiency of the Doctrine	307
XVI.	Theories and Speculative Views regarding the Trinity	310
XVII.	Errors and Heresies touching the Doctrine	311
XVIII.	Common Objections raised against the Catholic Faith touching the Trinity	312
XIX.	Modern Rationalistic and Scientifically Stated Objections to the Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity	314

THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION B.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

I. Explanation of Certain Terms employed in Dealing with this Doctrine.

1 Of the term "Trinity" itself.

[12399] A single person is an intelligent agent, having the distinctive characters of I, thou, he, and not divided nor distinguished into more intelligent agents capable of the same characters. The rationality is meant to distinguish a person from an individual of the brute creation, to which he allows personality only in a modified analogous sense. The absence of division is intended to exclude a collective, intelligent agent, as an army or a senate. In this sense the Trinity is not a person. A man, an angel, the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, the separated soul, the God-man, are each of them single persons. All other persons, save the three Divine Persons, are divided and separated from each other in nature, substance, and existence. They do not mutually and necessarily imply each other; but the three Divine Persons, being undivided and not having any separate existence independent of each other, they cannot be looked upon as substances, but as one substance distinguished into several suppositæ, or intelligent agents.—*McClintock and Strong, Encyclopædia.*

[12400] There are compound persons also. Man's soul and body together make a compound person and yet only one person. A man does not say We, but I. The God-man is a compound person consisting of the soul, body, and the Logos; but the result is one person. The same Christ made the world, increased in wisdom, was pierced by a spear. He is spoken of in Scripture as one I, one He, one Thou, whether with respect to what He is as Logos, or as having a soul or body.—*T. P. Boultbee, M.A.*

2 Of the term "Unity."

[12401] The word "unity" is ambiguous, and difficult to define. It may mean merely the numerical basis of calculation; the contrast between one thing and two or more things of the same kind. But if used in the sense of a unit, it is clear that every one thing is made up of many parts, possesses many qualities, stands in various relations, and though in itself only one thing, is also a part of many other things. By unity is often meant more than the antithesis of many. Though the unity of God means that there is only one God, in opposition to the claims of lords many and gods many, yet the phrase implies that whatever internal distinctions there may be in the essence of the Most High, that essence is one essence—a whole, a unity in itself. Unity is individuality in spite of the recognitions of the multiplicity of elements of which it is compounded. Thus a crystal of quartz of any magnitude is a unity distinct from all other crystals. It is one thing, as distinct from the hand that holds it, or the sun that shines upon it. It possesses a multitude of curious properties as long as it remains that one thing, pure and simple, undivided, and unanalyzed. But let me dash it on a rock and break it into a thousand pieces, large and small, and it might soon be proved that every fragment, even to the minutest dust of quartz adhering to each one of the particles, was preserving the same peculiar shape as the original unbroken crystal, and possessed in its measure all its properties. Yet these fragments, though many, previously formed one whole. Consider, again, a tree or plant; its root and stem, its branches and leaves, and flowers and seed, form one whole of mysterious beauty; and though each twig and leaflet is a perfect creation, having an independent life in itself, yet the many parts do not fail to form a well-appreciated and comprehended unity. Further, playing in the branches of this tree there is a world of more mysterious life. Every leaf has its colony of insects, every bough its parasitical growth; the bees are humming in its fragrant flowers, and the birds are building their nests in its branches. But each lichen and moss, each insect and animalcule, each bee and bird, is as wonderful in its mysterious combination of many opposites, and subordinate and dependent structures, and wondrous balancing of powers, as was the forest tree itself. But while I am considering crystal and tree, and insect and bird, I find that I myself am just such a combination of many parts, faculties, passions, and relations, each of which is sufficiently individual, and yet the whole of which seem all but indispensable to constitute my self-conscious unity. I am a strange combination of body, soul, and spirit; and yet I am reckoned as one man in this world of ours. My senses, reflections, and passions, my body, understanding, and will, seem at times capable of individualization, and to be unities in themselves; but it is the mutual relation and de-

pendence of the parts that constitute the unity of the whole.

With this self-consciousness of multiplicity in unity to help me, the revelation that the blessed God has made of His threefold nature is less perplexing than it otherwise would be. The unity of the Divine nature, like the unity of all other things, is a unity consistent with the self-inclusions of various constituent elements. In the case of the Divine Being, the unity and multiplicity are more intimately expressed and maintained than in any other unity, so that we actually use words which seem self-contradictory in order adequately to express that wondrous "unity in Trinity" which "neither divides the substance nor confounds the persons" of the adorable Godhead.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

3 Of the term "Person."

[12402] Three distinctions having their necessary base in the essence of the Godhead are matter of revelation. In the common language of the Western Church these distinct Forms of Being are named Persons. Yet that term cannot be employed to denote them without considerable intellectual caution. As applied to men, Person implies the antecedent conception of a species (Persona est naturæ rationalis individua substantia). But such a conception is utterly inapplicable to that supreme essence which we name God.—*Liddon.*

[12403] The Latin and Greek terms for Person in this connection are Persona and Hypostasis. From the Latin Persona, we have, both as to form and meaning, our English word Person. Hypostasis, the principal Greek term in the ancient theology to express the same idea, means that which stands under a thing, and bears it up. Of its own force this word is more nearly equivalent to being, essence, or substance, than it is to person. But after the Council of Nice, A.D. 324, it came to be used in the sense of the Latin Persona, and thus was incorporated in the doctrinal formulas of the Church.

In the ordinary use of the word Person, it means a living and intelligent being or agent, one of whom we predicate thought, volition, affection. Men and angels are personal beings, because they know, think, reason, will, and cherish and express intelligent feelings. For the same reasons we ascribe personality to God.

In connection, however, with the doctrine of the Trinity, its meaning is necessarily modified. The threefold personality of God has its ground in the one, eternal, indivisible essence. In three human persons there are three separate and independent natures or essences; in the three Divine Persons there is but one and the same numerical nature or essence. In the latter case, therefore, the word Person is not used in the same exact way as in the former; but only to denote such a threefold distinction in the one Divine nature as connects itself with personal properties and acts, without affecting the indivisible oneness. Calvin therefore said, repeating a thought of Augustine, that "the word Person was extorted by necessity, by reason of the poverty of language on so great a subject; not for the sake of expressing what God is, but to avoid passing over, in total silence, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three."—*William Lord, D.D.*

4 Of the term "Hypostasis."

[12404] *Hypostasis* (from *ὑπό*, under, and *ἵστημι*, to stand; hence *subsistence*), a term used in theology to signify *person*. Thus the orthodox hold that there is but one nature or essence in God, but three hypostases or persons. This term is of very ancient use in the Church. Cyril, in a letter to Nestorius, employs it instead of *πρόσωπον*, *person*, which did not appear to him sufficiently expressive. The term occasioned great dissensions, both among the Greeks and Latins. In the Council of Nicæa, *hypostasis* was defined to mean essence or substance, so that it was heresy to say that Christ was of a different hypostasis from His Father. Custom, however, altered its meaning. In the necessity they were under of expressing themselves strongly against the Sabellians, the Greeks used the word *hypostasis*, the Latins *persona*, which proved a source of great disagreement. The barrenness of the Latin language allowed them only one word by which to translate the two Greek ones, *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις*, and thus prevented them from distinguishing essence from hypostasis. An end was put to these disputes by a synod held in Alexandria about A.D. 362, at which Athanasius assisted, when it was determined to be synonymous with *πρόσωπον*. After this time the Latins made no great scruple in saying *tres hypostases*, or the Greeks three persons.

Some said that there was but one substance (*ὑπόστασις*) in the Godhead; others three *ὑποστάσεις* (substances or persons), and one *οὐσία* (substance); others spoke of more than one *οὐσια*. Some allowed, some rejected the term *προβολή* and *ὁμοούσιον*, according as they were guided by the prevailing heresy of the day and their own judgment concerning the mode of meeting it. Some spoke of the Son as existing in the Divine mind; others implied that the Logos was everlasting, and became the Son in time. Some asserted this *ἀναρχεν*; others denied it. Some, when interrogated by heretics, taught that He was begotten by the Father *θελήσει*; others *φύσει-καὶ μὴ ἐκ βουλήσεως, ὅυτε θέλοντος τοῦ. Πατρὸς ὅυτε μὴ θέλοντος, ἀλλὰ ἐν τῇ ὑπὲρ βουλὴν φύσει*; others spoke of a *σύνδρομος, θέλησις*. Some declare that God is *ἀριθμῷ τρεῖς*; others numerically one; while to others it might appear more philosophical to exclude the idea of number altogether in the discussion of that mysterious Nature which is beyond comparison, whether viewed as One or Three, and neither falls under nor forms any conceivable species.—*Dr. Newman.*

[12405] The substance of God with this property, to be of none, doth make the Person of

the Father; the very self-same substance in number with this property to be of the Father, maketh the Person of the Son; the same substance having added to it the property of proceeding from the other two, maketh the Holy Ghost. So that in every Person there is implied both the substance of God, which is one, and also that property which causeth the same Person to be really and truly to differ from the other two. Every Person hath his own subsistence which no other besides hath, although there be others beside that have the same substance. —*Hooper.*

5 Of the term "Hypostatical Union."

[12406] Hypostatical union denotes the subsistence of two natures in one person, in Christ. While the reality of such a union is established by the Scriptures, and is on that account maintained by our Church (see second Article of Religion, "so that two whole and perfect natures," &c.), it is to be lamented that many intricate and fruitless metaphysical questions have been debated among different sects of Christians as to the Divine nature of our Lord, and the manner of the union between the Deity and a man—the parties engaged in these questions being often too hurried into presumptuous as well as unprofitable speculations—on points as far beyond the reach of the human intellect as colours to a man born blind; and forgetting that the union of the soul and body of any one among us can neither be explained nor comprehended by himself or any other, and appears the more mysterious the more we reflect upon it.

II. The Economical History of the Doctrine.

1 As to its mode and time of revelation.

(1) *Some vague and indistinct notions of a Trinity existed from very early times.*

[12407] Connected with the conception of the great First Cause. Traces of the notions of a Trinity may be found in the Indian and classical mythologies. Plutarch speaks of a Trinity of God, matter, and the evil spirit, and Plato likewise has a τρίας, but nothing can be more indistinct than Plato himself in regard to the real meaning of his doctrine. We may find proof of the vagueness of thought in the variations of the terms used to indicate this τρίας. There is but faint resemblance between the νοῦς, ὕλη, οὐδία of Plato and the Christian Trinity. Another division of his τρίας is τὸ ἀγαθον; λόγος, σοφία or νοῦς; and ψυχή.—*Garbett.*

(2) *It was not fully revealed to the Jews under old dispensations, nor even to the disciples of Christ at first.*

[12408] A clear developed dogma of the Trinity is not to be found in the Old Testament, and that for good reasons. It was all-important under that dispensation that, in the face of heathen polytheism, the great fundamental truth of the Divine unity should be impressed on the religious consciousness of God's ancient people: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord." Too plain an utterance of Trinitarian doctrine would in such times have obscured the truth of the Divine unity, and misled into Tritheism. And for the like *pædagogic* reasons our Lord did not at first reveal the triunity of the Divine nature to His disciples. It was not till they had learned to believe in His Divine Sonship, and in some measure to apprehend His unity with the Father and pre-existence, that He could speak to them of the Divine Person of the Second Comforter; nay, it was not till He had proved Himself to be the fountain of eternal life by His own resurrection, and by His breathing on the apostles had kindled in their hearts the fire of the Holy Spirit, that He found them capable of receiving the divinest of mysteries, and therefore could leave behind Him as a precious heir-loom to His Church—as the deepest revelation of the Divine nature, as the one foundation of Christian faith, knowledge, and practice, and as the final seal and crown of all His teaching while here on earth—the great commission: "Go into all the world, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—*T. Christlieb, D.D.*

[12409] In the Old Testament three, and only three, Persons appear as manifestations of God: appearing, however, not absolutely as Divine Persons, but as having each a specific part in the conduct of the economy of providence and grace. In the New Testament these Three Persons have their parts more distinctly assigned to them: the Son is the Incarnate Son, declaring Himself sent by the Father and yet co-equal with Him, and Himself promises another self, a self who is yet another, the Holy Ghost. After the baptismal formula has been laid down, the redemptional Trinity is literally everywhere in the New Testament. There is a triple or threefold or three-one glory of the Godhead discernible throughout: sometimes more faintly; sometimes more clearly; sometimes with invisible demonstration; but always with reference to the origination, the accomplishment, and the administration of the redeeming work by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost respectively.—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

(3) *It was not disclosed until it became necessary, and then not by direct enunciation and formal statement, but as necessarily involved in the work of redemption.*

[12410] This mysterious doctrine of the Trinity never was disclosed till it became necessary to disclose it; you read it first in the baptismal formula of Christian believers. Neither is it a mystery revealed to us for barren curiosity, as an abstract contribution to our knowledge of God. Rather it has come out, so to speak, by the way; involved incidentally in those great doctrines of the incarnation, atonement, regeneration, and sanctification, which

form the pith and staple of Christian teaching. When God's way of saving sinners came to be laid quite bare before us, then, and not before, there had to be unveiled this undiscoverable fact concerning the one Jehovah, that His name is threefold—the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.—*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

2 As to its relation to the abstract monotheism of the Jews, and the idolatrous polytheism of the Greeks.

[12411] The Trinity of our faith means a distinction of Persons within one common indivisible Divine nature. It implies, therefore, as its base that the Divine nature is one and indivisible. It excludes the notion of lords many and gods many. For this reason God revealed the essential oneness of His being first; and it was only after Israel had, through many weary centuries and many bitter lessons, learned that truth, that Jesus did or could disclose to His disciples the "name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." On polytheistic soil no such revelation could have been, in the first instance, intelligible. Gentiles, accustomed to think of a throng of conflicting deities, would certainly have misunderstood it. It was to monotheistic Israel—to Israel, whose whole history had been one prolonged and at the last successful inculcation of this primary truth, "The Lord our God is one Jehovah," that the later message could be sent with any hope of its being understood, that Jehovah's name is the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. When you think how passionately the Hebrews of our Lord's time clung to that peculiar tenet which their nation had been set in the heart of pagan polytheisms on purpose to defend—the truth that God is one; and when you see at the same time how such Hebrews as John, Paul, and Peter came to revere Jesus the Son of God as equally to be worshipped with the Father, and received the invisible Spirit who came at Pentecost as no less truly a Divine Person, you must feel that this new revelation of a Trinity in God left quite unaltered their old faith that God is one. It was a mighty and a blessed addition to their knowledge of Jehovah; but it did not shake what they knew before—"Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah."—*Ibid.*

[12412] John of Damascus made his boast of Christianity that it stood as it were in the centre between the abstract monotheism of the Jews and the idolatrous polytheism of the Greeks; that it completed what was wanting and corrected what was deficient in both. In his own words: "By the doctrine of the unity of the Divine nature, the polytheism of the Greeks is clearly abolished; by the admission of the Logos and of the Spirit, the doctrine of the Jews is purified. That which is profitable in each conception remains. From the doctrine of the Jews we have the oneness of nature; from the Greeks the distinction in hypostases alone.—*A. D. C. Twesten.*

III. The Ecclesiastical History of the Doctrine.

1 Its development.

[12413] The Ante-Nicene Church held the doctrine in an undogmatic form, but a catena of their testimonies proves that the apostolic fathers made a large advance towards later definitions. All forms of early creeds direct Christian faith to Three Persons, as also their doxologies, such as that of Polycarp. Athenagoras repudiates the charge of atheism on the ground of believing in Three Divine Persons. Theophilus of Antioch gives us the term "Triad," used after him by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Hippolytus, and by Tertullian and Novatian changed into *Trinitas*. Tertullian's language is very expressive. "All three are one by unity of substance, and the unity is developed into a Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Origen is equally clear.

Very soon, however, heresies on this particular doctrine became rife. Praxeas (160–180) was the author, promulgator of *Patripassianism*, so called because it abolished the distinction between the Father and the Son who suffered. But Sabellius (250) more fully developed the error, which from him was taken the name of *Sabellianism;* and from his peculiar theory that of *Modalism*, or the assumption that the one Lord appeared first as Jehovah, then more clearly as the Son, then more fully and spiritually as the Holy Ghost. The general idea of *Subordinationism* took various forms, but on the whole the Ante- and Post-Nicene fathers laboured to preserve the Monarchia, or unity of the Divine essence, by representing the Father as the Fountain of the Deity and its representative. They laid, however, great stress on the derived, but eternally derived, divinity of the Son and the Holy Ghost. The term "subordination," which came into use at a later period, is an obviously perilous one, from the difficulty of admitting a subordination which does not include inferiority. *Arianism* took its name from Arius, who reduced the Son to a Divine creature, and taught that the Spirit was the first creation of that first-born creature, though he maintained that both were Persons, and much more intimately near to God than to the created universe. *Semi-Arianism*, which went as far as it could in making the Son the unchangeable image of the Father, was not quite so solicitous to maintain the dignity of the Spirit. Macedonius of that party has connected his name with that of the *Pneumatomachoi*, or enemies of the Spirit.

The Council of Nicæa (325) against Arius, and that of Constantinople (381) against Macedonius, vindicated for ever the doctrine of the Trinity; the former in relation to the divinity of the Son, the latter in relation to the personality of the Spirit. The specific relation of the Spirit to the Father and the Son, however, was not determined till 594, when, at a synod held at Toledo, the term "Fitioque" was added to the Nicene Creed, which, asserting the

Double Procession, was one main cause of the permanent rupture between the churches of the East and West. The Athanasian Creed completed and fixed the ecclesiastical form of the doctrine, although it does not give due prominence to its redemptional aspect.

The schoolmen exhausted their subtlety on this profound subject, but added nothing of permanent value. *Nominalism*, which allowed nothing but nominal existence to the general nature represented by the individual as a specimen, obviously though unintentionally led to Tritheism. *Realism*, which asserted the reality of the nature behind the individual, was more faithful to the Trinity in Unity.

The communities of the *Reformation* retained the three creeds, and were generally faithful to the doctrine, with this difference in their favour; their exhibition of the absolute Trinity has always interwoven with it an evangelical reference to the redemptional aspect of the doctrine. After the Reformation most of the ancient types of error reappeared in various forms adapted to altered circumstances. Socinian *Unitarianism* denied the divinity of Christ and the personality of the Holy Ghost. Sabellianism reappeared in *Swedenborg's* Trinity of Principles, and of the eternal God-man, and in *Schliermacher's* Philosophy. Arianism, too, revived to mould opinion very extensively in later Christendom; and subordinationism was exaggerated by the *Remonstrant* divine, especially those of the later age of Arminianism, and glided downwards to Unitarianism.—*W. B. Pope, D.D.* (*altered and condensed*).

2 The form in which it is held.

[12414] Ever since the doctrine of the Trinity was elaborately defined by the theology of the Church in the fourth and fifth centuries it has lain at the foundation of our Christian creed as one of its most sure and unassailable articles. There are more reasons than one why such general acceptance of it might awaken some surprise. It is a doctrine quite peculiar to Christianity. It is undiscoverable by reason. It is very difficult to state, and quite impossible to explain. On a careless view, it even appears to conflict with a strict monotheism. Yet for all that, so deeply do its roots lie in Scripture, and so essential has it proved itself to be in Christian life, that it has hardly ever been rejected in Christendom save by rationalistic thinkers, or by some minute and feeble communities whose Christianity has withered or blanched into such colourlessness that one is at a loss whether to call it Christianity at all.—*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

[12415] The doctrine of the Trinity as set forth in these three ancient creeds—the Nicene (A.D. 325), the Constantinopolitan (A.D. 381), and the Athanasian (A.D. 450–550?)—is the Church form of that fundamental article of the Christian faith. There is no difference, except as to amplification, between these three formulas.—*J. Hodge.*

3 The necessity of studying its ecclesiastical and historical aspects.

[12416] Its historical aspects are necessary in order to answer such questions as these: whether the conceptions of Spirit and of the Logos, which were current in the times of Christ and His apostles, and not invented by them, were received in the way of accommodation, or whether they are essential to the Christian system, and what is their Christian significancy, valid for all times: in the second place, for philosophical definitions, in order to determine whether those principles designated as the Logos and the Spirit, which are connected with facts or phenomena of the Christian life, be natural or supernatural, created or Divine, personal or impersonal; and what is their relation to one another, to the Divine nature, and to their revelation in time? If, now, we are convinced that the three following positions—that is, that no view of the subject is Christian and Scriptural, which either does not see anything truly Divine in Christ or in the Spirit who dwells in believers; or, does not truly distinguish the one from the other, and both from the divinity of the Father; or, which would set aside the unity of the Divine nature; and if we find it necessary in expressing all this, to employ conceptions and formulas, by which the errors may be avoided and the truths maintained, then, we say, that the results of such investigations, though they may be given in a terminology not contained in the Scriptures, cannot be said to be opposed to the doctrine of the Bible. It is the doctrine of the Bible itself, philosophically illustrated and defined; and though it may be best in popular instruction to abide by the Biblical mode of presenting the doctrine, yet the philosophical mode will still be a regulative and corrective for any untenable and erroneous notions which might be connected with the former.—*A. D. C. Twesten.*

IV. The A Filioque Question, or the Controversy between the Eastern and Western Churches.

[12417] That the Father is the fountain and original of the whole of deity is a formula always recognized in the Western Church: cf. the *decretum unionis* of the Florentine council, A.D. 1439, in the introduction: "The Latins affirm that they do not say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son with the design of excluding the Father from being the fountain and original (*fons ac principium*) of the whole of deity, even of the Son and Holy Spirit." On the other hand, no one will doubt the perfect congruity of the Greek view with that given in the Athanasian Creed, which was originally more occidental, if he but read the passages bearing upon it in the ἔκδοσις of John of Damascus.—*Ibid.*

[12418] The motives which originally led the Greek Church to hold with exactitude to the Nicene formula, "who proceeded from the

Father," and the Western Church, particularly the Spanish, to add "and the Son," were not at all opposite to one another; and neither could justly reproach the other with molesting the truth. The Greeks were led to their view, partly by the way in which they were accustomed to maintain the Divine monarchy in consistence with the triplicity, since the Father was regarded as "the original, the root and the fountain of divinity" (ἀρχήν, ῥίζαν καὶ πηγὴν τῆς θεότητος); partly by their opposition to the Pneumatomachists, since the latter seemed to exhibit the Spirit as created by the Son and subordinate to Him. On the other hand, the Western Church, in respect to the Divine unity, were satisfied by the notion of one identical Divine nature in the three Persons, and sought to counteract the Arian subordination of the Son to the Father, by making Him equal to the Father also in His relation to the Holy Ghost. Assuredly, neither could the Occidental Church accuse the Greeks of not sufficiently acknowledging the consubstantiality and the divinity of the Son; nor, on the other hand, could the Eastern Church accuse the Western of not holding to the monarchy and to the divinity of the Spirit. Upon a question, therefore, which, however it might be answered, would endanger no article of faith, and which was decided by no direct assertion of the Scripture, there was less necessity of division in the Church, in proportion as the parties were agreed that these relations are inscrutable to man's understanding; and it would of course follow that any speculative grounds of decision, if such there were, even if they should be more favourable to one hypothesis than to another, ought still to be regarded as of subordinate weight. As to the Scriptures, the Greek Church could urge that in the only passage in which the procession of the Spirit is spoken of (John i. 15, 26—we will not inquire whether this be its doctrinal sense), it is derived "from the Father," while the Latin Church could say that the Spirit is not only sent by the Father, but also by the Son (John xv. 26; xvi. 7), and that He is called the Spirit of Christ and of the Son (Rom. viii. 9; Gal. iv. 6), which would allow the inference of similar relation in respect of His subsistence also. But as the Greeks denied the validity of this inference, since it was not confirmed by the testimony of Scripture, so might the Latins maintain, that the procession from the Son was as little excluded by the procession of the Father as is the fact that the Spirit is sent by the Son (which is elsewhere proved) excluded because He is in one place (John xiv. 26) described as sent only by the Father. In this state of the contest, how desirable the parties should have been satisfied with the mediating formula, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son! This, although it would not have prevented any one from making additional statements, would not have excluded any view compatible with the formula; but this is just what theological disputants have seldom been able to conclude upon. The Greeks protest against every interpretation which would make the Son the ground, not merely of the giving, but also of the subsistence of the Spirit.—*Ibid.*

V. Definitions and General Summaries of the Doctrine.

[12419] 1. Scripture teaches that there is one God.

2. There is nevertheless clear *intimation* of some kind of plurality in the Godhead, even in the Old Testament; but in the New Testament there is a clear *declaration* that the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God.

3. This fact of the plurality is not in express terms a contradiction of the Unity, such as would be the case if in one passage it were said, "There is one God," and in another passage, "There are three Gods;" for it appears from Scripture that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are but one and the same God.

4. Still, though Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are but one God, there is plain evidence from Scripture that the Father is not the Son, nor is either of them the Holy Ghost, but that they are clearly distinguished from one another, and distinguished too as *personal* agents, not merely as modes, operations, or attributes.—*Bp. Harold Browne.*

[12420] There is one Divine nature or essence common unto three Persons, incomprehensibly united and ineffably distinguished; united in essential attributes, distinguished by peculiar idioms and relations; all equally infinite in every Divine perfection, each different from the other in order and manner of subsistence; that there is a mutual existence of one in all, and all in one; a communication without any deprivation or diminution in the communicant; an eternal generation, and an eternal procession without precedence or succession, without proper causality or dependence; a Father imparting His own, and a Son receiving His Father's life, and a Spirit issuing from both, without any division or multiplication of essence. —*Isaac Barrow.*

VI. Tests to be applied to Definitions of the Trinity.

[12421] There are seven tests which any definition of the Trinity must meet. It must not be modalistic nor unintelligible; it must not be tritheistic nor Unitarian; it must not be a contradiction in terms nor unhistorical; and, above all, it must not be unscriptural.—*Joseph Cook.*

VII. The Church's Teaching as to the Doctrine of the Trinity.

1 As to the Unity in the Trinity.

(1) *In the Godhead there is an unity of essence.*

[12422] The essence of the Godhead is common to the several Persons. They have a common intelligence, will, and power. There are not in God three intelligences, three wills, three

efficiencies. The three are one God, and therefore have one mind and will. This intimate union was expressed in the Greek Church by the word περιχώρησις, which the Latin words *inexistensia*, *inhabitatio*, *intercommunio*, were used to explain. These terms were intended to express the Scriptural facts that the Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son. In man the soul and body are distinct, yet while united they have a common life. We distinguish between the acts of the intellect and the acts of the will, and yet in every act of the will there is an exercise of the intelligence; as in every act of the affections there is a joint action of the intelligence and will. These are illustrations of the fact that in other and entirely different spheres there is this community of life in different subsistences. This fact of the intimate union, communion, and inhabitation of the Persons of the Trinity is the reason why everywhere in Scripture, and instinctively by all Christians, God as God is addressed as a Person, in perfect consistency with the Tripersonality of the Godhead.—*C. Hodge, D.D.* (*condensed*).

[12423] In His essence the gospel tells us that "God is Love;" and the same gospel which teaches us that God is Love teaches us also that the one love reveals itself in a threefold personality as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Although the Christian mind rests in the purest monotheism, it can only attain to a knowledge of the one Love through the medium of the three Persons. Christian worship calls men away from the altars of polytheism, and elevates their souls to the one God, but it does so in a threefold direction; for we know by faith that eternal life streams down to us out of three personal fountains of love—from God the Father who has created us; from God the Son who has redeemed us; and from God the Holy Ghost who sanctifies us, and makes us the children of God—in this Trinity alone do we possess the whole of love.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[12424] Here is a spiritual created being, a human soul, setting aside for the present the consideration of the human body, which united therewith made up the man, Christ, confessed to be in hypostatical union with the uncreated spiritual being of God; not as that being is in the person of the Father, nor as in the person of the Holy Ghost, for then they should have become man too; but as it was in the person of the Son only. Why shall it be thought less possible that three uncreated spiritual beings may be in so near a union with each other as to be one God, than that a created spirit, and body too, should be in so near union with one of the persons in the Godhead only, as therewith to be one person?—*J. Howe*, 1693.

(2) *In the Godhead there is an unity of knowledge, love, will, and work.*

[12425] Created spirits, as angels and human souls, are then most perfectly united to each other when they most perfectly know one another and know all that each other knows, and perfectly agree in all they know, which is an union in knowledge; when they perfectly love one another, have the same will, the same affections, the same interests and designs; when they are a kind of unisons, which move and act alike, as if one soul animated them both—this is that perfect unity which is so frequently and earnestly recommended to Christians both by Christ and His apostles, as we may see everywhere in Scripture. And the very same union with this, there is between the Persons of the ever blessed Trinity; an union in knowledge, in love, in will, in works. 1. *Between the Son and Father.* (*a*) *Knowledge*, John i. 18; x. 15. (*b*) *Love*, John xiv. 31. (*c*) *Will*, John v. 20; vi. 38; iv. 34. *Work*, John v. 19. 2. *Between the Holy Ghost and the Father.* (*a*) *Knowledge*, 1 Cor. ii. 10; John xvi. 13–15. (*b*) *Love*, Rom. v. 5. As some of the ancients represent it, He is that love wherewith the Father and the Son love each other, and therefore there is no question but that He who unites Father and Son, and unites God to us, and us to God, by love, is united to Father and Son by love Himself. (*c*) *Will and work.* He is that Holy Spirit who renews and sanctifies us, and subdues our wills into a conformity with the Divine will, and therefore no doubt but He has the same will and does the same works as the Father and the Son. Thus Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are most intimately united, but after all this is no more than what we call a moral union, such as may be between created spirits, which remain separate beings still, and though they are morally are not essentially one. As, for instance, every man by an inward sensation feels his own knowledge, will, and affections, but he does not know any other man's thoughts, or will, or passions by feeling them in himself as he does his own, but by an external communication of thoughts; and therefore, though they may be morally one by an exact agreement and harmony of thoughts and passions, as far as by external communication they can know, what each other's thoughts and passions are, yet they are essentially distinct and separate; but Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one not by an external agreement or consent, but by an internal consciousness, as every man is one with himself; if I may so speak, because we want proper words to express it, they feel each other in themselves, know the same thing by feeling each other's knowledge and will and love alike, by feeling what each other wills and loves, just as every man feels his own thoughts, knowledge, will, and passions; that is, are as intimate to each other, and as essentially one, by a mutual self-consciousness, as every man is one with himself. And the phrases and expressions of Scripture, whereby the unity or oneness of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are expressed, require this sense. Thus the Son is the eternal word and wisdom of the Father, and therefore as intimate to Him as every man's reason is to himself, and knows the Father, not by external revelation, but as every man knows himself.—*W. Sherlock, D.D.* (*condensed*).

[12426] The Holy Scriptures do not ascribe creation to the Father only, nor redemption and sanctification to the Son or Spirit alone. It is also said of the Son that by Him all things were created (Col. i. 16), and that He upholds all things by His powerful word (Heb. i. 3); the name of Saviour (σωτήρ) by which we are accustomed to reverence Christ is also given to the Father (1 Tim. i. 1, ii. 3, iv. 10; Tit. i. 3, iii. 4); the Son Himself prays to the Father that He would sanctify His disciples (John xvii. 17). In like manner, also, certain individual acts comprised in the total work of redemption and sanctification are ascribed, now to one, and now to another of the Divine Persons; *e.g.*, it is usually said that the Father raised up Jesus from the dead (Acts iii. 15); but Christ also declares that He has power to lay down His life and to take it again (John x. 18); it is God the Father who judgeth without respect of persons (1 Pet. i. 17), and yet the judgment is committed to the Son (John v. 22). When those gifts, offices, and powers are spoken of, by which the Church is made the temple of the indwelling Spirit (1 Cor. iii. 16), not only is the Holy Spirit named as the author of them, but one Lord and one God are also mentioned, through whom, whatever is demanded for the common good, is imparted to every member (1 Cor. xii. 4-7). In short, there seems to be no Divine work from which any one Person of the Godhead can be excluded.—*A. D. C. Twesten.*

(3) *In the Godhead there is an union of mutual consciousness.*

[12427] In finite created spirits, which have no parts and no extension that we know of, no more than a thought, or an idea, or a passion have extension or parts, their numerical oneness can be nothing else but every spirit's unity with itself, and distinct and separate subsistence from all other created spirits. Now this self-unity of the spirit which has no parts to be united can be nothing else but self-consciousness; that it is conscious to its own thoughts, reasonings, passions, which no other finite spirit is conscious to but itself. This makes a finite spirit numerically one, and separates it from all other spirits, that every spirit feels only its own thoughts and passions, but is not conscious to the thoughts and passions of any other spirit. And therefore, if there were three created spirits so united as to be conscious to each other's thoughts and passions as they are to their own, I cannot see any reason why we might not say that three such persons were numerically one, for they are as much one with each other as every spirit is one with itself, unless we can find some other unity for a spirit than self-consciousness; and I think this does help us to understand in some measure this great and venerable mystery of a Trinity in Unity.—*W. Sherlock, D.D.*

[12428] How we may conceive of these relations as distinct from one another, and yet not distinct from the nature of God, is well illustrated in Keckermann by the relation of existence and mode of existence. "*E.g.*, one and the same hand is now shut and now open; the closed hand is not a different one from the opened, and yet the fist differs and is distinguished from the opened hand; yet it is not really distinguished but in the mode. . . . As therefore the degree of heat is not the heat, and the degree of light is not the light, thus, too, the modes of things are not the things themselves, but are something pertaining to the things. A more obscure light and a more clear light are not two things (*res et res*), are not light and light, but one and the same light with a certain mode or degree, which degree is distinguished from the light itself not really, nor yet by reason or thought alone, but as certain modes from the thing modified." That is, the distinction is not arbitrary, but there is something in the thing itself which justifies it. It will be still more appropriate to refer for illustration to that threefold relation which we find to be the condition of self-consciousness, where the *I* makes itself its own object, and in this object again recognizes itself. Here there are certain antagonisms, the making itself an object and the being made such, the giving itself to be known and the being known, which must be looked upon as really different from one another; and yet this threefold *I*, which makes itself an object, which is made such, and which knows itself as such, is only one *I*, by virtue of a unity which is not merely generic, but numerical; only it is conceived of in different relations to itself. These relations are not *really* distinct from the *I*, which without them would not be *I*, yet in our conceptions of them they are distinguished from it, and that, too, by a necessity which exists in the very nature of self-consciousness. Yet we repeat that thus we can only analogically illustrate the sense of the definitions of the Church respecting this doctrine, but cannot exhaust or adequately express them.—*A. D. C. Twesten.*

2 As to the plurality of Persons in the Trinity.

[12429] If God reveal Himself to the world as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it is because He *is* what He reveals Himself as being. The Trinity of revelation implies and presupposes the Trinity of inward being which it thus makes manifest. The eternal generation of the Son and procession of the Spirit involve a Divine impulse from eternity to creation and redemption. In like manner the Trinity of revelation has ontological elements. If love be the essence of the Divine nature, the impulse to revelation is inherent in it. In other words, God's actions *without* imply *inward* workings and revelations, and His inward actions and revelations are the necessary premises and preparations for His outward working. In revelation God reveals *Himself*, and the impulse of

self-manifestation belongs to His inmost being. —*T. Christlieb, D.D.* (*condensed*).

[12430] In the *opera œconomica* the distinction of the persons is much more apparent. The restitution of the human race is indeed a work of the whole Trinity, which is achieved *by* the Father *through* the Son *in* the Holy Spirit, according to the principle of the order and mode of the operation of the Persons, which is here, too, of valid application. But since, to the execution of this work *through* the Son, that is, to our redemption, the incarnation of God is necessary, which can be attributed *terminative* only to the Son ; and, to the completion of this work *in* the Holy Spirit, that is, to our sanctification, the indwelling of God in believers is necessary, which can be attributed *terminative* only to the Spirit ; to which elements, then, as a third, the eternal purpose of the Father *from* which the whole work of redemption proceeds is to be co-ordinated ; it is clear from this that the participation of the the Three Persons in this work of restitution, which is designated by the prepositions *from*, *through*, and *in*, expresses a wholly different relation from that of their participation in the work of creation, which is also designated by the same prepositions. On this account the *opera œconomica* are called *personalia* and *minus communia ;* but yet only *minus communia* (not as the internal works, *divisa*), and *personalia* only *secundum quid* (not absolutely personal, as are generation and procession) ; for it is not so much the efficiency itself as its result, its terminus, in which the separation of the persons is revealed. And even *terminative* we cannot make this separation valid, without taking precautions for again holding fast the union of the persons in some other manner ; this is done by means of the conception of the *sending* (the *missio*) of the Son.—*A. D. C. Twesten.*

3 As to the co-equality in the Godhead.

[12431] If these Three Persons be thus mutually in each other they must be all equal ; for if the Father be in the Son, how can the Son be less than the Father, if He comprehends the Father and all His infinite perfections? If Son and Holy Ghost are in the Father, and Father and Holy Ghost in the Son, and Father and Son in the Holy Ghost, imagine what inequality you can between them ; if Son and Holy Ghost are conscious of all the infinite perfections which are in the Father, and have all the perfections they are conscious of, how can Son and Holy Ghost be less perfect than the Father, or than each other? I am sure our Saviour attributes all His wisdom and knowledge and power to His intimate conscious knowledge of His Father, which He calls seeing Him, which is such a knowledge as creatures cannot have of God (John v. 19, 20).—*W. Sherlock, D.D.*

[12432] Considered in His personal subsistence, the Son cannot be called *αὐτόθεος*, but only the Father, since He alone is *ἀγέννητος* ; but the *ἀγεννησία* of the person is not to be confounded with the absoluteness of the essence. Or, if one should say that the former is something absolute, and that what is begotten or what proceeds is, in distinction from this, something relative, yet we are not obliged to give to this terminology any other sense than we do when we speak of God in His absolute independence and in His relation to the world, or when we distinguish the absolute and relative attributes of God, by which we do not imply that the latter conflict with the idea that God is an unconditional and infinite Being. What Keckermann says of the notion of the infinite may be perfectly applied to the notion of the absolute in this connection. He cites the objection : "Person in God is either finite or infinite ; if finite, then it is not God ; if infinite, then there are three infinites, because three Persons ;" and to this he replies : "Person is to be considered in a twofold way : 1. In respect to the essence, and so it is infinite but is not triple. 2. In respect to the relation, or mode of existence, and so is neither finite nor infinite, because finitude and infinitude are properties of an entity or thing ; but a person, so far as person, that is, in respect to the mode of its existence, is not an entity, but the mode of an entity ; modes, however, are neither finite nor infinite."—*A. D. C. Twesten.*

4 As to the special offices of the Three Persons in the Godhead.

(1) *Although all the Divine attributes belong equally to all the Persons in the Godhead, yet some are especially appropriate to the different Persons when speaking of their various functions and acts.*

[12433] The reference by appropriation (*per appropriationem*) is made, when attributes which are essential to the Divine nature are assigned to one of the Persons of the Godhead, or when one of these Persons reveals Himself by attributes of the Divine nature. This is especially the case when such an attribute stands in closer connection with the hypostatic character of the Person ; which is seen in this, that, although we cannot deny it to any one of the Persons, we yet find it to be especially appropriate to the one or the other (this may be called *appropriation* in the more limited sense, while the other cases may be designated by the more general word, *attributio*). Thus, for example, power, wisdom, and love are attributes of the Divine nature in general ; but, *per appropriationem*, power is assigned to the Father, wisdom to the Son, and love to the Holy Ghost. So, too, it is said of God, without special designation of the Persons, that of (from) Him, through Him, and to Him (*εἰς αὐτόν*) are all things (Rom. xi. 36) ; and even of the Father (Eph. iv. 6), that He is above all, through all, and in all ; but, *per appropriationem*, the *from* is ascribed to the Father, the *through* to the

Son, the *in* to the Holy Spirit. That this is not arbitrary, will be apparent to every one who has a clear view of the distinction of the Persons, in accordance with the declarations of the Scriptures, and the doctrinal development of this distinction, although it is not easy to carry out the proof of it, since we have here to do with attributes of the Divine nature which are common to all the Persons ; and it is especially difficult if, with the majority of the evangelical theologians, we have doubts about taking our point of departure from any speculative views of the Trinity. The most important point here is the appropriation of the *particulæ diacriticæ* ἐκ, διά, and ἐν, which may be directly and sufficiently justified from the Holy Scriptures themselves (cf. 1 Cor. viii. 6 ; Eph. ii. 18 ; John i. 3) ; for this appropriation is made in view of the relation of the Persons to the Divine works, and points, on the one hand, to the difference in the order and mode of action, and, on the other hand, to the unity which still exists in the action itself; for, when the Father works through the Son in the Holy Spirit, the action is one, and yet it is defined in a threefold way in reference to the Three Persons.—*Ibid.*

[12434] Under *internal characteristics* we comprise both the order and the manner of subsistence (*ordo subsistendi*, *ratio subsistendi*). By the former is meant that the Father is unchangeably the first, the Son the second, and the Holy Spirit the third Person in the Godhead ; by the manner of subsistence, which is the necessary condition of the order, is meant that the second Person has the ground of its subsistence in the first, and the third in the first and second. This last rests upon two acts immanent in the Divine essence (*opera ad intra*, *actus personales*), from which we derive, on the one hand, those three peculiar properties which constitute the notion of the three Persons (*proprietates personales*) ; and, on the other hand, some other characteristics (called *notiones personales*), which also serve to distinguish them. —*Ibid.*

5 As to the order of Persons in the Godhead.

[12435] *Ordo subsistendi.* Since now it is clear that any inequality of nature or essence is utterly out of the question, because the essence in all three Persons is one and the same, the difference which exists can relate only to the subsistence, and not to the notion or the necessity of the subsistence, but only to the order thereof (*ordo subsistendi*). By virtue of this the Father is the first, the Son the second, the Holy Ghost the third Person ; not in the order of time (*ratione temporis*), for in God all is alike eternal ; not in their nature (*ratione naturæ*), for this is coincident with the essence which is identical in all ; but in view of the origin or emanation of one Person from another, in their relations as generating, generated, and proceeding, upon which alone the distinction of the Persons reposes. In this sense, then, the Athanasian Creed can maintain that "in this Trinity none is afore or after other" (that is, in time), "none is greater or less than another" (that is, in nature), "but the whole three Presons are co-eternal together and co-equal" (that is, on account of their consubstantiality or sameness of substance) ; and yet an inequality can be conceded, if thereby nothing else is meant than that the Father is the principle of the subsistence of the Divine essence in the Son, and that the personality of the Spirit has its ground in the Father and the Son ; for the doctrine of the Church is so far from denying this, that it is, on the contrary, wholly based upon it.—*Ibid.*

VIII. The Connection between the Church's Teaching and that of the Scriptures Touching the Trinity.

[12436] These do indeed believe that they can prove the ecclesiastical formulas more directly from the Scriptures, not only of the New, but even of the Old Testament, than we find to be possible. For in the latter, only through the mediation of the New Testament, can we find the germs ; and even in the New Testament it will be hard to find the form of the doctrine of the Trinity as it is received in the Church in any other way than as we interpret it in view of the elements of its historical development, and of the conflicts through which it passed ; for even the questions to which we seek an answer in the Scriptures are, for the most part, given to us only in subsequent history. Yet even our older divines concede that the termini introduced into the Church (without which, however, the doctrine itself cannot be maintained) are derived only by inference from the Scripture, in order to set aside erroneous conceptions, and that, outside of the theological sphere, the truth can and should be communicated only in the words of the Bible.

We believe it to be true, that if we follow the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in a historical and genetic manner, that the antagonisms and points of contest, which must come up and be discussed, one after another, could not be otherwise adjusted or decided than they have been, in order to be in accordance with the results of a true interpretation of Scripture, as guided by a vital Christian experience, consequently that the dogma itself could not take any other form than it has taken.—*Ibid.*

IX. Nature and Characteristics of the Doctrine.

1 It is the distinguishing feature of Christianity.

[12437] We see in it that which specifically distinguishes our religion from all antecedent and contemporary faiths ; exactly defining it against polytheism, on the one hand, and He-

brew and Arabian monotheism on the other. We see in it the sublimest and completest theory of God—a God whose nature is neither diffracted by multiplicity, nor yet concluded in singularity; who is neither the unconscious all of pantheism, nor the insulated self of Judaism; a God whose essence is not to be sought in lone seclusion, but in everlasting self-communication; whose being is a unit, and yet a process—a process of which the two associated names, Son and Holy Ghost, are the august terms and the perfect method; a God who allies Himself with finite intelligence by the co-eternal, mediating word, and reflects Himself in human nature and enchurches Himself in human society by the ever-proceeding sanctifying Spirit.—*E. Robie.*

2 Its discovery is altogether supernatural.

[12438] It is a discovery altogether supernatural; yea, Nature is so far from finding it out, that now, when Scripture hath revealed it, she cannot by all the help of art comprehend or set it forth as she doth other things, grammar itself wanting proper and full words whereby to express, logic strong demonstrations whereby to prove, and rhetoric apt similitudes whereby to clear so mysterious a truth. The terms essence, persons, trinity, generation, procession, and such-like, which are commonly made use of for want of better, have been and will be cavilled at as short of fully reaching the mystery in all its dimensions. Of the similitudes usually brought for its illustration that which Hilary said is most true: "They may gratify the understanding of man, but none of them exactly suit with the nature of God." Well, therefore, may rhetoricians say it is not in us and in our similitudes fully to clear this high point; logicians also, It is not in us and in our demonstrations fully to prove it.—*Arrowsmith.*

3 It is a mystery, the greatest of all mysteries.

[12439] That God, who is a Spirit, should yet be three in Person is a mystery purely of revelation, and therefore one which, when once stated in such terms as are made known to us, we can no further explain or elucidate.—*Bp. Moberly*, 1868.

[12440] A mystery is something of which we know *that* it is, although we do not know *how* it is. A self-contradiction is the inconsistency of a proposition with itself or with its own implications. I know *that*, but not *how*, the grass grows; I know *that* my will lifts my arm, but not *how* it does so. The mystery does not hinder my believing the facts.—*Rev. Joseph Cook*, 1878.

[12441] It is a mystery, the protest of all mysteries, and the key of all mysteries, but itself has no key.—*Vinet.*

[12442] St. Augustine tells us that, while busied in writing his discourses on the Trinity, he wandered along the seashore, lost in meditation. Suddenly he beheld a child, who, having dug a hole in the sand, appeared to be bringing water from the sea to fill it. Augustine inquired what was the object of his task. He replied, that he intended to empty into this cavity all the waters of the great deep. "Impossible!" exclaimed Augustine. "Not more impossible," replied the child, "than for thee, O Augustine, to explain the mystery on which thou art now meditating."

[12443] I believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost as three distinct Persons; but I believe that above our knowledge there is a point of coincidence and unity between them. What it is I do not know. That is the unrevealed part. The revealed part is that the Divine nature stands forth to us as separate, individual Father, separate, individual Son, and separate, individual Spirit; and that in the vast recess of the being of God, which transcends our knowledge, there is a coming together of the three.—*H. W. Beecher.*

[12444] You are not to be curious in your inquiries beyond what is written in this matter, how far the subsistents in the Godhead are three, and in what sense one. They cannot be both in the same sense. But there is latitude enough to conceive how they may be distinct from each other, and yet agree in one nature; which in none of them depending upon will and pleasure, sets each of them infinitely above all created being, which for Divine pleasure only was and is created.—*J. Howe*, 1693.

4 It is not against reason, but above reason.

[12445] You believe there is such a thing as light, whether flowing from the sun or any other luminous body; but you cannot comprehend either its nature or the manner wherein it flows. How does it move from Jupiter to the earth in eight minutes, two hundred thousand miles in a moment? How do the rays of the candle brought into the room instantly disperse into every corner? Again, here are three candles, yet there is but one light. Explain this, and I will explain the Three-One God.—*J. Wesley.*

[12446] A gentleman, passing a church with Daniel Webster, asked him, "How can you reconcile the doctrine of the Trinity with reason?" The statesman replied by asking, "Do you understand the arithmetic of heaven?" The application is evident.

[12447] The Trinity is purely an object of faith, the plumb-line of reason is too short to fathom this mystery; but where reason cannot wade, there faith must swim. There are some truths in religion which may be demonstrated by reason; as that there is a God: but the Trinity of persons in the unity of essence is wholly supernatural, and must be believed by faith.—*T. Watson.*

5 **It is a mystery best understood by personal experience.**

[12448] He that goes about to speak of and to understand the mysterious Trinity, and does it by words and names of man's invention, or by such which signify contingently, if he reckons this mystery by the mythology of numbers, by the cabala of letters, by the distinctions of the schools, and by the weak inventions of disputing people—if he only talks of essences and existences, hypostasies and personalities, distinctions without difference, and priority in co-equalities, and unity in pluralities, and of superior predicates of no larger extent than the inferior subjects, he may amuse himself and find his understanding will be like St. Peter's upon the mount of Tabor at the Transfiguration; he may build three tabernacles in his head, and talk something, but he knows not what. But the good man that feels the "power of the Father," and he to whom "the Son" is become "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;" he in "whose heart the love of the Spirit of God is spread;" to whom God hath communicated the "Holy Ghost the Comforter;" —this man, though he understands nothing of that which is unintelligible, yet he only understands the mysteriousness of the holy Trinity. No man can be convinced well and wisely of the article of the holy, blessed, and undivided Trinity, but he that feels the mightiness of "the Father begetting him to a new life;" the wisdom of "the Son building him up in a most holy faith;" and the "love of the Spirit of God making him to become like unto God."—*Taylor.*

X. Adumbration of this Doctrine in Heathen Mythology.

[12449] A trinity of deities is common to all nations. The Emperor of *China* offers once every year a sacrifice to the Spirit of Trinity and Unity. Lao-tse (600 B.C.) says: Tao is by nature one; the first begat the second; both together brought forth the third; these three made all things. We are more familiar with the *Indian* Trimurti, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, who are represented and worshipped as three persons, though the original Divine principle Brahm is but one. In a commentary on the Rig Veda it is said: There are three Deities, but there is only one Godhead, the great soul. The so-called *Chaldean* oracle says, "The Unity brought forth the Duality which dwells with it and shines in intellectual light; from these proceeded the Trinity which shines through the whole world." The names of the Chaldean Trinity are Anos, Illinos, Aos. In like manner we find a Divine Trinity among the *Babylonians* (witness the three images in the temple of Belus), the *Phœnicians* (Ulomus, Ulosurus, Elun), and the *Egyptians* (Kneph or Ammun, Pthah, and Osiris). The divinities of *Greece* were grouped by mythologers both in a successive (Uranas, Chronos, Zeus) and a simultaneous trinity (Zeus, Poseidon, Aidoneus). So, too, among the *Irish* (Kriosan, Biosena, Jiva), the *Scandinavians* (Thor, Woden, Fricco), the ancient *Prussians*, the *Pomeranians*, the *Wends*, and the old *Americans*. Do not all these coincidences serve as an indirect proof to compel us to acknowledge that Schelling was right when he said, "The philosophy of mythology proves that a Trinity of Divine potentialities is the root from which have grown the religious ideas of all nations of any importance that are known to us? . . . This idea does not exist because there is such a thing as Christianity; on the contrary, Christianity exists because this idea is the most original of all."—*T. Christlieb, D.D.* (*condensed*).

XI. Scripture Proofs of the Doctrine.

1 **Introductory remarks as to their nature.**

[12450] No evidence is demanded to prove the Godhead of the Father. It is a fact universally credited—unquestionable and conclusive. Our opponents believe it equally with ourselves. He is God of gods and Lord of lords, the supreme fountain of life, the giver of all goodness, the beginning and the end. Our attention will therefore be directed to inquire what definite information the Scriptures give of any other persons distinct from and equal to Him. (*a*) *Divine names* are applied to all the Persons alike. (*b*) *Divine perfections* are ascribed to them. Eternity, power, omniscience, omnipresence, holiness, truth, benevolence. (*c*) *Divine works* are performed by them. Creation, providence, resurrection, inspiration, sanctification. (*d*) *Divine worship* is paid to them.

[12451] The doctrine of the Trinity is firmly established by those passages of Holy Scripture which on the one hand prove the unity of God, and on the other the personality and deity of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. If God is absolutely one, and yet the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are severally God, then the Trinity of God is a necessity and a demonstration. Besides these, are other passages of Scripture which bear on this great doctrine in its more general aspect, and as a whole. They are found in both the Testaments, and give unmistakable evidence of doctrinal truth.—*Wm. Lord, D.D.*

2 **The intimations in the Old Testament of a plurality in the Godhead.**

(1) *In the words in Genesis by which Moses describes the primal creative act of God.*

[12452] The two words בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים, by which Moses describes the primal creative act of God, was not insisted upon by the primitive Church teachers. It attracted attention in the Middle Ages, and it was more particularly noticed after the revival of Hebrew letters. When Moses is describing this Divine action, he joins a singular verb to a plural noun. Language, it would seem, thus submits to a violent anomaly, that she may the better hint at the mystery of several powers or persons who not merely act together, but who constitute a single agent. We are indeed

told that this name of God, Elohim, was borrowed from polytheistic sources, that it was retained in its plural form in order to express majesty or magnificence, and that it was then united to singular verbs and adjectives in order to make it do the work of a monotheistic creed. But, on the other hand, it is confessed on all sides that the promulgation and protection of a belief in the unity of God was the central and dominant object of the Mosaic literature and of the Mosaic legislation. Surely such an object would not have been imperilled for no higher purpose than that of amplification. There must have been a truth at stake which demanded the risk. The Hebrew language could have described God by singular forms such as El, Eloah, and no question would have been raised as to the strictly monotheistic force of those words. The Hebrew language might have "amplified" the idea of God thus conveyed by less dangerous processes than the employment of a plural form. Would it not have done so, unless the plural form had been really necessary, in order to hint at the complex mystery of God's inner life, until that mystery should be more clearly unveiled by the explicit revelations of a later day? The analogies of the language may indeed prove that the plural form of the word had a majestic force; but the risk of misunderstanding would surely have counterbalanced this motive for using it unless a vital need had demanded its retention. Nor will the theory that the plural noun is merely expressive of majesty in ברא אלהים, avail to account for the plural verb in the words, "Let us make man." In these words, which precede the final act and climax of the creation, the early fathers detected a clear intimation of a plurality of persons in the Godhead. —*Canon Liddon.*

[12453] Who is this that God converses with here? To whom are these notifications and determinations of His pleasure directed? Not to any of the creatures already made, much less to those things which were not yet created, but undoubtedly to some person who was then present with the Father, with whom He communicated His counsels, and of whose agency He made use in the creation of them. And who could this be but His eternal Word? With whom can we conceive the Father holding this conference but with His Son, the Divine Logos, that wisdom of God that was present with Him, and acted with Him in the creation of the world, who was in the beginning with God, and was God? and who saith of Himself, "When He prepared the heavens, I was there; when He appointed the foundations of the earth, then was I by Him as one brought up with Him."—*Athanasius.*

(2) *In the priestly blessing.*

[12454] In Numbers vi. 24–27:

Jehovah bless thee and keep thee:
Jehovah make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:
Jehovah lift His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

If the three members of this form of benediction be attentively considered, they will be found to agree respectively with the three Persons taken in the usual order of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Father is the Author of blessing and preservation; illumination and grace are from the Son; illumination and peace from the Spirit, the Teacher of truth, and the Comforter.—*R. Watson.*

[12455] The three repetitions of the name Jehovah intimates a great mystery; neither is the remark of R. Menachem to be rejected concerning the three variations of the accents on the same word: what can it signify more aptly than the adorable Trinity of Divine Persons in one Deity, whence as from an ever-flowing fountain all benediction is derived to us? Compare 2 Cor. xiii. 14; Rev. i. 4–6. The first section, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee," is very conveniently referred to the Father, concerning whom Paul writes (Eph. i. 3): "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual benediction in Christ;" and to whom Christ Himself saith (John xvii. 11): "Holy Father, keep them through Thine own name." The next section, "The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee," belongeth unto Christ, who is the light of the world, and of the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. xxi. 23); "whose face shineth as the sun" (Rev. i. 16); in whose face is "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" (2 Cor. iv. 6); in whom is most completely accomplished that proverb of the wisest of kings, "In the light of the king's countenance is life, and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain" (Prov. xvi. 15); in whom, finally, are "the exceeding riches of His grace" (Eph. ii. 7). The last section, "The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace"—where He signifies the application of grace and the communication of peace and joy—is properly applied to the Holy Spirit, through whom the "kingdom of God is to us righteousness and peace and joy" (Rom. xiv. 17).—*Witsius.*

(3) *In the seraphic vision of Isaiah* vi.

[12456] The inner part of the Jewish sanctuary was called the Holy of Holies—that is, the holy place of the holy ones; and the number of these is indicated and limited to three in the celebrated vision of Isaiah, and that with great explicitness. The scene of that vision is the holy place of the temple, and lies therefore in the very abode and residence of the holy ones, here celebrated by the seraphs who veiled their faces before them. And one cried unto another, and said, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts." This passage, if it stood alone, might be eluded by saying that this act of Divine adoration is merely emphatic, or in the Hebrew mode of expressing a superlative, though that is assumed and by no means

proved. It is however worthy of serious notice that this distinct trine act of adoration, which has been so often supposed to mark a plurality of persons as the objects of it, is answered by a voice from that excellent glory which overwhelmed the mind of the prophet when he was favoured with the vision, responding in the same language of plurality in which the doxology of the seraphs is expressed: "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" But this is not the only evidence that in this passage the holy ones, who were addressed each by his appropriate and equal designation of holy, were the three Divine subsistences in the Godhead. The Being addressed is the "Lord of Hosts." This all acknowledge to include the Father; but the Evangelist John (xii. 41), in manifest reference to this transaction, observes, "These things said Esaias when he saw His (Christ's) glory, and spake of Him." In this vision, therefore, we have the Son also, whose glory on this occasion the prophet is said to have beheld. Acts xxviii. 25 determines that there was also the presence of the Holy Ghost: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear and not understand, and seeing ye shall see and not perceive," &c. These words, quoted from Isaiah, the Apostle Paul declares to have been spoken by the Holy Ghost, and Isaiah declares them to have been spoken on this very occasion by the "Lord of Hosts." "And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed and understand not, and see ye indeed but perceive not," &c.—*R. Watson.*

3 The express declarations in the New Testament of a plurality in the Godhead.

(1) *In the baptism of Christ.*

[12457] At our Saviour's baptism we have the Father speaking, the Son acting, and the Spirit coming down—a text so evidently holding forth the Persons of the Trinity, in their distinct and separate existence and agency, that in ancient times, when any one was suspected of being an Arian, it was said to him, "Go to Jordan, and there thou wilt see a Trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit."—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 1859.

(2) *In the baptismal formula.*

[12458] In this formula our Lord has presented to faith the name and nature of God in its perfect revelation. Christian baptism is to be administered into the name εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, into the new name: not names as of many, but name as of one. Yet the repeated καί, *and of*, declares a spiritual distinction in the Godhead as the object of faith, trust, hope, and full devotion, for baptism meant this and nothing less. These were not to be called to believe in God and two subordinate gods; that would have been only the introduction of a new form of the polytheism from which the heathens were to be converted; nor in God, and a Mediator, and an Influence, for the names Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are not simply names of office.—*W. B. Pope, D.D.*

[12459] To baptize is, in a general sense, to cleanse from defilement, and to set apart for a pure use: as an ordinance of the Christian religion to be received but once, it is symbolically to cleanse from the defilement of sin, and to consecrate by a perpetual obligation to a Christian life. This obligation is the most comprehensive which can be imposed: it involves faith, worship, and obedience; the devotion of body, and soul, and spirit: and it is incurred to the name not only of the Father, but of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. It is not worship towards one, obedience towards another, and faith towards another; nor is it all these in a different sense and degree towards each; nor yet is it all these in the same sense towards one, through another, and in another. Our Saviour does not make any division, distribution, or gradation of our baptismal engagements; neither does He distinguish one person, as more especially, or in a higher degree, the object of those engagements than another.—*J. S. L. Vogan, M.A.*, 1837.

(3) *In Christ's farewell discourses, John* xiv–xvi.

[12460] The Divine sovereignty of the Father being everywhere understood, Christ presents Himself to enforce His own claims as the Son of God through nearly the entire of twelve or thirteen successive chapters. He is now the prominent figure; His connection with the Father; His mysterious prerogatives thence arising; the power and glory of the kingship He inherently possesses as God, and has won to Himself as man; these are the topics that engage the pen of the Evangelist. In the fifth and sixth chapters, more especially, Christ speaks in a tone of dignity which seems to centre in Himself the whole power of the Godhead. All seems (in comparison) to disappear from the scene except the Second Person, and His claims to unbounded fealty as the sole dispenser of every blessing from His Father to man. He alone is visible between us and heaven; in Him light, and life, and salvation; beyond Him clouds, and desolation, and darkness. At length the hour arrives when He must leave the scene He had so long almost exclusively occupied. Accordingly, His prominence as the main object of the record gradually lessens; but exactly in proportion as it lessens, a new occupant fills the field of view. Christ, simply as Christ, is, in His turn, almost lost in the glory of "another Paraclete" who is "to abide" with the Church of God "for ever." Thenceforth to the close of His teaching it is this Being who is the principal object disclosed to the spiritual anticipation.—*W. Archer Butler, M.A.*

(4) *In the apostolic benediction*, 2 *Cor.* xiii. 14.

[12461] We have stated in this text, not merely the three Divine Persons mentioned by

name, but we have a grand characteristic assigned to each, some great feature by which each one actuates man, brings its influence to bear upon man, and how it is that blessings are brought down from heaven, from God, and conveyed to those that are the people of God. This text, this benediction, supplies to us what we may call the three great watchwords of the Christian faith—grace, love, and fellowship. There is a triple work; there must be a triplicate of workers to perform that triple work, and each Person discharging His own individual work. I am not going to enforce upon you a mere dogma or doctrine of the Trinity; I want to lift it out of dogma into reality, and then it is a proper doctrine. To speak about the offices of the three Divine Persons, and not about the three Divine Persons themselves that fill those offices, would be indeed but poor doctrine. Talk about an office apart from the man, and you talk about a sinecure, you talk about a fiction, you talk about, perhaps, a fancy, you talk about a thing that does not really exist; but fill the office with the person, fill the niche with the person that is to occupy it, and let us see that office fulfilled, and the work that is to be done there executed, and then all becomes real at once. And so here is the doctrine of the Trinity, that there are three great and effectual works to be wrought upon man. God the Father has undertaken one of these; that makes Him real, and His work real. God the Son has undertaken another of these; that makes Him real and His work real; and God the Holy Ghost has undertaken to discharge the remaining one of these three, and that makes the work and the Person of the Holy Spirit to be alike real.—*R. Maguire, D.D.*

(5) *In the opening Apocalyptic visions, Rev.* i. 4, 5.

[12462] Here the Father is described by a periphrasis taken from His attribute of eternity, and the seven spirits is a mystical expression for the Holy Ghost, used upon this occasion either because the salutation is addressed to seven churches, every one of which had partaken of the Spirit, or because seven was a sacred number among the Jews, denoting both variety and perfection, and in this case alluding to the various gifts, administrations, and operations of the Holy Ghost. Since grace and peace are prayed for from these three Persons jointly and without discrimination, we infer an equality in their power to dispense those blessings; and we further conclude that these three Persons together constitute the Supreme Being, who is alone the object of prayer, and is alone the giver of every good and of every perfect gift.—*Bp. Tomline.*

XII. Confirmation of the Doctrine by Arguments drawn from Human Reason.

[12463] (1) The eternal existence of Deity being a necessary truth, the attributes of Deity must exist necessarily and eternally. (2) Some of the attributes are active powers, and must therefore have been eternally active. (3) The exercise of the Divine attributes necessarily implies both an agent and an object. If intelligence be exercised, there must be an object known, as well as the agent who knows. If power be exercised, there must be both agent and object in its exercise. If love be exercised, there must be an object beloved as well as the agent who loves. (4) The agent and object cannot be numerically, identically, personally, and in every respect the same. They involve such different relations to each other as cannot be sustained by an absolute unity. (5) In the exercise of some of the Divine attributes it is essential that the object as well as the agent should be a conscious and intelligent existence. This truth is demonstrative, especially as it applies to the moral attributes, such as truth, justice, holiness, love, and the disposition for communion. (6) Created existence presents a vast collection of objects in reference to which the Divine attributes have been, and still are, exercised; but, vast as is the aggregate of these objects, the whole are not sufficient, either in duration or extent, for the full, eternal, and infinite exercise of the Divine perfections. (7) The mental archetypes of created existence could not be the adequate objects for the exercise of the Divine attributes. For if the objects, when actually existing, are inadequate, the mere ideas of those objects must be equally insufficient, and therefore eternally insufficient. (8) The Divine nature itself is the only sphere in which God's attributes can have adequate scope for their fullest exercise. His absolute perfection and infinity are as essential as his existence, and therefore his own nature must be adequate to the fullest scope of the exercise of his attributes; and as the eternal exercise of his attributes is as essential as the existence of his attributes, it follows, that not only must his nature afford an ample sphere for the fullest exercise of his attributes, but such must be the peculiar mode of his being as to admit the possibility of the Divine attributes being exercised within and upon itself. (9) If the Divine nature be the only adequate sphere of the activity and exercise of the Divine attributes, then the peculiar mode of the Divine nature must include both agent and object within itself. (10) If the Divine nature include both agent and object within itself, there must be some plurality in the Godhead. (11) If the Divine nature include some plurality, it must be a plurality of persons. It would be irrational to suppose a plurality of essences. It cannot be a plurality of offices, for mere offices, however distinct, cannot be agent and object to one another. Nor can the plurality consist of the Deity and His attributes, for neither can these be reciprocally agent and object one to another. The plurality must consist of persons—if the agent be a person, so must the object be a person, for they are reciprocally agent and object to each other.—*W. Cooke, D.D.* (*condensed*).

XIII. Confirmation of the Doctrine by Arguments drawn from the Religious Consciousness.

1 The Christian doctrine of the Trinity unites and satisfies the wants felt by the cravings of human nature.

[12464] There are elements in natural religion which are met by the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. These are: the sense of dependence, the consciousness of man's greatness, and the sense of solitude. The natural man asked himself, "Whence am I?" and the answer which occurred to him as the most satisfactory was: "Nature gave me birth." The earliest form of rational religion is nature-worship, and in this worship nature is the substitute for Fatherhood. The early religion of India stands as the representative of this phase of the first pre-Christian problem. The second is discovered in Greece. Then man had got to know his own importance, and no longer looked up to nature as above him. The result was that mere nature-worship was replaced by the worship of mind, the universal mind, the great soul of the world. This phase of the problem is represented by Platonism. But Platonism, with its love of the universal, had made man solitary, and human nature craves for companionship. This want was met in the mythology of the West by the deification of men. This phase could not appear at the earliest stage of religious experience. Only after man had conquered nature could he begin to deify himself. He does so in self-defence. In losing nature-worship he has lost the worship of an outward power, and he dreads to find himself alone. To fill the blank he weaves out of himself a new religious world.

Thus following the process of human need, we arrive at a threefold thought of God reached by the religious world which lived before the Cross—the thought of a fatherly or begetting principle from which humanity emanated, of a Divine spirit in which humanity has its being, and of a human form which humanity can give to the Divine. The Christian Trinity unites and satisfies the three wants—the first in the Father, the second in the Spirit, the third in the Son. In natural religion the three needs revealed themselves at different times and in different peoples, but their appearance anywhere and at any time showed them to be real needs of man, though not always or equally felt. In the Christian Trinity we see the reconciliation of the elements which the heathen world has divided.—*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*

2 The doctrine of the Trinity is demanded by Christian experience.

[12465] It arose not from metaphysical speculation imported from without, but from a devotional necessity in men's own hearts; not from Platonic philosophy, but from the demands of Christian experience, in its inseparable connection with the teachings of the sacred Scriptures. And so now it is the practical interests of Christian experience, in their connection with the great facts of redemption, that prompt inquiry into this subject. The Christian heart feels that the Christ it adores, and from whom it has received forgiveness of sins, is not a mere creature, however exalted, but is the very brightness of God; and that the Holy Spirit who reveals Christ to us, and forms Christ within us, is not an impersonal influence, but an ever-present Comforter and Friend, in whom we have communion with God and with all who love God. Here there is manifestly some sort of threeness in the Divine Being. The Christian heart equally demands the Divine unity. The problem is to harmonize these demands.—*E. Robie.*

[12466] My heart demands the Trinity as much as my reason. I want to be sure that God cares for us, that God is our Father, that God has interfered, stooped, sacrificed Himself for us. I do not merely want to love Christ, *a* Christ, some creation or emanation of God's, whose will and character for aught I know may be different from God's. I want to love and honour the abysmal God Himself, and none other will satisfy me. No puzzling texts shall rob me of this rest for my heart that Christ is the exact counterpart of Him in whom we live and move and have our being. I say boldly, if the doctrine of the Trinity is not in the Bible, it ought to be, for the whole spiritual nature of man cries out for it.—*Charles Kingsley*, 1877.

[12467] When we reflect upon the author of creation and the author of redemption, there comes into our minds a decided contrast between Him who, when He created all things, gave them over, as it were, to a separate and independent existence, and Him who, in that He redeemed created beings from death and sin, called them back from the struggle they were making to live without God and for themselves alone, to a life of union with God, to a life which comes from God. And so, when we restrict our thoughts to the work of redemption alone, we feel and see a contrast between Him to whom the world was to be reconciled, and Him who made the reconciliation; between the Father who conceived the purpose of bringing back a sinful race to blessedness by means of the merits of His Son received by faith, and the Son, who was sent by the Father, and who by His life and doctrine, by His sufferings and work, by His death and resurrection, carried that purpose into effect and wrought out salvation for us.

Accordingly we say that the religious consciousness of the Christian seems to demand, not only that we refer our redemption to God, but also that we make a distinction between God so far as we owe to Him our redemption, and God so far as we consider Him as the author of our natural existence.—*A. D. C. Twesten.*

[12468] When I sate as a boy on my mother's

knees, and learned from her to pray, I believed on God the Father, who reigns aloft so great and good, who created the beautiful earth and the beautiful men and women that are upon it, who to sun and moon and stars foretold their appointed course. And when I grew a little older and bigger, then I understood more and more, then I took in new truth with my reason and my understanding, and I believed on the Son—the well-beloved Son, who in His love revealed to us what love is, and who for His own reward, as always happens, was crucified by the senseless world. And now that I am grown up, and that I have read many books and travelled in many lands, my heart swells, and with all my heart I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God. He it is who works the greatest of miracles, and greater miracles yet shall He work than we have yet seen. He it is who breaks down all the strongholds of oppression and sets the bondmen free. He it is who heals old death-wounds and throws into the old law new life. Through Him it is that all men become a race of nobles, equal in the sight of God. Through Him are dispersed the black clouds and dark cobwebs that bewilder our hearts and brains.—*Heine.*

XIV. Illustrations of the Trinity.

1 Preliminary remark respecting the purpose for which they are used.

[12469] Any illustration on the subject of *the Trinity* should be used with the deepest reverence. None such are quoted here, not because there is not some aptness in them; but what Hilary says is most true—"They may gratify the understanding of man, but none of them exactly suit the nature of God." "Sir, in these matters," said one of our reformers, "I am so fearful that I dare not speak further. Yea, almost none otherwise than as the Scriptures, as it were, lead me by the hand."—*Rev. G. S. Bowes.*

[12470] It is sometimes erroneously supposed that such illustrations as this are intended to explain how the sacred mystery in question is possible, whereas they are merely intended to show that the words we use concerning it are not self-contradictory, which is the objection most commonly brought against them. To say that the doctrine of the Son's generation does not entrench upon the Father's perfection and immutability seems at first inconsistent with what the words Father and Son mean, till another image is adduced, such as the sun and radiance, in which that alleged contradiction is seen to exist in fact. Here one image corrects another; and the accumulation of images is not, as is often thought, the restless and fruitless effort of the mind to enter into the mystery, but is a safeguard against any one image, nay, any collection of images, being supposed sufficient. If it be said that the language used concerning the sun and its radiance is but popular, not philosophical, so again the Catholic language concerning the Holy Trinity may, nay, must be economical, not adequate, conveying the truth, not in the tongues of angels, but under human modes of thought and speech.—*John Henry Newman, D.D.*

2 Illustrations drawn from physical laws.

[12471] Indications of complex unity meet us at every turn. One of the most striking is found in binocular vision. If we look at an object, each eye takes in a perfectly independent, separate and distinct, spectrum. Indeed, the two spectra are not absolutely identical; yet we see but one object with our two eyes, and by no effort of our will can we see two. The facts of the case are very plainly brought out by means of the stereoscope; but the stereoscope does no more than explain to us what takes place whenever we open our eyes. Again, in a musical chord there is no mixture or confusion of the three sounds. The ear perceives each separately and by itself; yet all three form one sound. What is more, the notes of the triad have a certain correlation which cannot be displaced. Invert them as you may, the tonic, the mediant, and the dominant retain each its characteristic properties. To say that one is three may be numerically false, but there are other departments in nature where it is true, and thus, when discussing the nature of God, it is absurd to suppose that we are bound by arithmetical considerations. — *Church Times*, 1884.

[12472] It is quite conceivable that there might be one living force manifested in three different ways, without its being a Trinity. Let us try and understand this by an illustration. Conceive a circular thin plate of metal; above it you would see it such; at some yards distance as an oval; sideways, edgeways, a line. This might be the account of God's different aspects: in one relationship to us seen as the Father, in another as the Son, in another as the Spirit; but this is not the doctrine of the Trinity, it is a heresy, known in old times by the name of Sabellianism or modal Trinity, depending on our position in reference to Him. Further, this is not merely the same part of His nature, seen in different aspects, but diverse parts of His complex being—persons—three causes of this manifestation. Just as our reason, our memory, our imagination, are not the same, but really ourselves. Let us take another illustration. A single white ray of light falling on a certain object appears red; on another, blue; on another, yellow. That is, the red alone in one case is thrown out, the blue or yellow in another. So the different parts of the one ray by turns become visible; each is a complete ray, yet the original white ray is but one. So we believe that in that unity of essence there are three living Powers which we call Persons, distinct from each other. It is in virtue of His own incommunicable essence that God is the Father. It is the human side of His nature by which He is revealed as the Son, so that it was

not, so to speak, a matter of choice whether the Son or the Father should redeem the world. We believe that from all eternity there was that in the mind of God which I have called its human side, which made it possible for Him to be imaged in humanity ; and that again named the Spirit, by which He could mix and mingle Himself with us. This is the doctrine of the Trinity, explained now, not to point the damnatory clause of the Athanasian Creed, but only in order to seize joyfully the favourable opportunity of professing a firm belief in the dogmatic truth of the Trinity.—*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*

3 Illustrations drawn from psychological and metaphysical laws.

[12473] We can distinguish in ourselves a threefold way of viewing our own personality (a threefold *me*) ; that which is hidden in the ground of our being, which comes out of this ground, and views itself as an object ; this objective personality, in which we look at ourselves objectively ; and, again, a subjective personality, a viewing of this second, objective personality, as being still identical with, or nothing other than ourselves ; and as these three are yet one and the same person (the same *I*), only seen in different aspects or referred back to itself in different ways, in the same manner the Divine nature presents itself to our consideration under three internal relations. Considered as generating the image (or idea) of itself, it is the Father ; considered as existing in the eternal idea (a thought) of itself, it is the Logos, the Son ; considered as having this thought of itself in distinct vision, or as returning back from it again into itself, it is the Spirit. But it returns back in order again to proceed forth in action, to unfold in the world the riches of the Divine omnipotence, wisdom, and love ; for with the very thought of His infinite perfections, united as this must be with the highest complacency in them, we also conceive that there is connected the will or purpose of God, to bring these perfections into full view in the world, and to impart His own blessedness to His creatures.—*A. D. C. Twesten.*

[12474] Take three—the will, the affections, and the thoughts of man. His will is not his affections, neither are his affections his thoughts ; and it would be imperfect and incomplete to say that these are mere qualities in the man. They are separate consciousnesses, living consciousnesses—as distinct and as really sundered as it is possible for three things to be, yet bound together by one unity of consciousness. Now we have distincter proof than even this that these things are three. The anatomist can tell you that the localities of these powers are different. He can point out the seat of the nerve of sensation ; he can localize the feeling of affection ; he can point to a nerve and say, "There resides the locality of thought." There are three distinct localities for three distinct qualities, personalities, consciousnesses ; yet all these three are one. Once more, we will give proof even beyond all that. The act that a man does is done by one particular part of that man. You may say it was a work of his genius, or of his fancy ; it may have been a manifestation of his love, or an exhibition of his courage ; yet that work was the work of the whole man : his courage, his intellect, his habits of perseverance, all helped towards the completion of that single work. Just in this way certain special works are attributed to certain personalities of the Deity ; the work of redemption being attributed to one, the work of sanctification to another. And yet just as the whole man was engaged in doing that work, so does the whole Deity perform that work which is attributed to one essential.—*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*

4 Illustration drawn from the relation of moral law to the author of law.

[12475] We may perhaps illustrate the eternal or timeless relation of the Son to the Father by the relation of moral law to the author of law. God did not create moral law any more than He created His own being ; yet moral law is derived from God, and resides in God, and is eternally dependent on God. Moral law is as eternal as God Himself ; yet it does not and cannot exist separate from or independent of God. It has its source and seat and strength in the bosom of God for ever. So God did not create the Son ; but the Son is derived from the Father, and is in the bosom of the Father. The Son is as eternal as the Father ; but He can do nothing of Himself ; His whole being is in and of the Father, and whatsoever things the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son.—*E. Robie.*

XV. Importance and Practical Efficiency of the Doctrine.

1 It has enriched and enlarged our conception of God.

[12476] When we now think of God, the ever-blessed object of trust and worship, we think of a Being who is one, yet not single. His unity of moral life results from the perfect interaction of a plurality, and this is a higher and more fruitful sort of life than if He were an absolutely simple unit—a monad. At least, we find that, in all sorts of created life we know, the higher or nobler the life, the more complexity is found in it. From the nearly inorganic simplicity of a polypus to the infinite riches of man's manifold being, with its exquisite trinity of body, soul, and spirit, you can trace this law of life : the more complex life is, involving the interaction of various parts, so much the more fertile and noble does life become. What is single remains alone ; it is capable of little fruit. Thus a fixed and rigid monotheism is the most blank or the least productive of all creeds, as you can see in that sternest and most barren faith of Islam. The Mohammedan world reposes with a fatalistic, death-like torpor upon this solitary tenet : there is but one God. And in that single God is no play of affection, no interaction of life, no human likeness ; nothing but a mechanical and

fateful decree, which lies on human hearts like a gravestone.

Contrast with this, I pray you, the rich and lovely and manifold play of social affections which Scripture suggests within the ever-blessed and sacred Three. Our God reveals Himself as eternally capable of the most perfect blessedness, because He was never solitary, even when alone. Before creation began to rise, within the awful depths of an eternity where nothing was save God, we already discern at the heart of the infinite Deity this sacred companionship. God is not now—He never was—simply and solely "I."—*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

2 It is the necessary means of manifesting and supporting in the mind of our race a faith in the true personality of God.

[12477] The actual departures from this faith have been in two directions. On one side, the religious sentiment, subjected to a process of intellectual generalization, has resulted in Pantheism. On the other side, the religious sentiment, subjected to a process of sensual limitation, results in some form of idolatry. Despairing to conceive of personality without limitation, some men rush over to the one; despairing of retaining a Deity near enough for love and sympathy who is literally infinite, others stop short with a deity who is not God. These implanted wants are wonderfully satisfied in the Divine Trinity. In the absolute and one only Godhead all man's highest, purest, largest, most far-reaching conceptions, stretching away into the regions of infinitude, eternity, almightiness, have their full and complete exercise. In the incarnate Christ, taking up our humanity, the longing for a personal, sympathizing, companionable Deity, is blessedly answered—and yet God is there; there is no loss of the essential and veritable Deity. In the Holy Spirit, the natural desire of the devout mind to connect God with all the operations of the present world, the processes of creation, the welfare, renewal, revolutions, sanctification of the human family, finds its lawful verification. —*Bp. Huntington.*

3 It affords the only possible basis for a just revelation and representation of the Fatherhood of God.

[12478] It is a fatal objection to the Unitarian theories of this subject, as viewed under the teaching of the Scriptures, that God is nowhere represented, or named, as the Father, till after the appearing of Christ. It is also an objection equally fatal to the Sabellian theory, which, as commonly understood, represents that God is the Father, in virtue of His creation and government of the world. For if He is the Father simply as the one God, by what accident does it happen that He never gets the appellation till after the coming of Christ? Or, if He gets it as the Creator and Governor of the world, the world was created and governed long before that day, why, then, is He still unknown as the Father? True, He is called *a* Father, just as He is called a rock, or a tower, but never *the* Father, as in the baptismal formula, and by Christ ordinarily. There is, in fact, no real and proper development of the Father, which is older than Christianity, and here the designation is developed in connection with the Son and Holy Spirit as a threefold denomination of God. —*H. Bushnell, D.D.*

4 It provides the only adequate basis for communication between God and man.

[12479] Revelation seems to encourage us in believing that the chief ultimate object of religion is to elevate man into affinity with his Creator. For *this* he was created in Paradise; *this* the new creation is to regain. To ensure this community of nature Christ came on earth in ours in order that first occupying *our* nature He might spread His own through us. Hence was he made at first in "the image" of God; hence are we perpetually reminded that the spiritual life on earth is conformity to the image of the Son; hence the glory of heaven is declared to consist in being "like Him," as "seeing Him as He is." Now mark, through the entire compass of the New Testament this mystical communion between man's soul and the powers of eternity is, without a shadow of distinction, referred to God—to Christ—and to the Holy Spirit as its objects. To unite with the one involves union with the other two: as we have "the fellowship of the Father" so have we "the fellowship of the Son" and "the fellowship of the Holy Ghost;" as we are "baptized into the name of the Father," so are we "baptized into the name of the Son" and "the name of the Holy Ghost;" as God is our life, so is "Christ our life," and "the Spirit is life."—*W. A. Butler, M.A.* (*condensed*).

5 It promotes the historical development and practical piety of the Church.

[12480] Each of the great Christian movements, from the apostolic age to our own, whether for the missionary extension of the gospel, or for the reformation and revival of its spiritual power, has held up the Triune confession as the inscription on its standard. But that confession has been more than a conventional battle-cry or password for the hallowed aggressions of the Church militant. It has expressed realities very precious to the heart, and its chief potency has been in the moral energy of those realities. It offers a ceaseless testimony to the inspired character of revelation. It administers a strong and wholesome rebuke to the "wisdom of this world." It is a merciful safeguard to veneration and humility. It gives definiteness to religious experience, a more scientific development to theology, a more unhesitating confidence to worship, a more opulent grace to each sacrament, a surer authority and more Biblical unction to preaching, and a more specific end. On the other hand, where the Trinity is denied, besides the direct loss of positive evangelical resources, there is a decline

of Christian efficiency. There is a diminished attachment to Christ. Exultant thankfulness at release by the cross is gone. Living faith in the Divine personality dwindles. The liberty of prayer is shortened. Missions are languid, and enthusiasm is unknown.—*Bp. Huntington* (*condensed*).

6 It is the primal foundation of the great facts of Christianity.

[12481] The Trinity of God is the necessary groundwork of the whole Scripture doctrine of the atonement for sin, or the reconciliation between God and man. Transgression has introduced between God and man a new element and a new relation. Sin is not an act only, but a state, a state of the individual and a state of the race. Hence the great need of the race was that God should come into it anew in a quickening, healing, life-giving, personal mediation. Lost humanity was to be restored, how plainly! only by an incarnation of God Himself in the Son, making a perfect union of it with His own Spirit by the "Word made flesh." The Holy Spirit ever comes, from the Father and the Son, to make the whole work effectual for the Church and the heart. We behold, we begin at least to behold, why God is for ever One—is for ever Three.—*W. Sherlock, D.D.*, 1698.

[12482] It is the basis of atonement for sin by Divine sacrifice, and regeneration of the soul by Divine influence. Only a Divine Saviour could make atonement for sin; only a Divine Spirit can give life to the soul. Hence these doctrines stand or fall with the doctrine of the Trinity. It is essential to the true spiritual worship of God. We worship the Father, through the Son, in the communion of the Holy Ghost. In every true conception of God two ideas are involved: 1. The infinity or incomprehensibleness of God. 2. His personality or individual relation to every praying soul. The infinity of God alone considered makes us feel that prayer is impossible, but the revelation of Jesus Christ saves the soul from wandering into shadowy abstractions, and gives a definite object of thought and worship. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities."—*E. Robie.*

[12483] The doctrine of the Trinity, whether in its Biblical or its metaphysical form, is a wholesome rebuke to that readiness to dispose of the whole question of the Divine nature, as if God were a man, a person like ourselves. To acknowledge this triple form of revelation, to acknowledge this complex aspect of the Deity, as it runs through the multiform expressions of the Bible, saves, as it were, the awe, the reverence due to the Almighty Ruler of the universe, tends to preserve the balance of truth from any partial or polemical bias, presents to us not a meagre, fragmentary view of only one part of the Divine mind, but a wide, catholic summary of the whole, so far as nature, history, and experience permit. If we cease to think of the universal Father, we become narrow and exclusive. If we cease to think of the Founder of Christianity and of the greatness of Christendom, we lose our hold on the great historic events which have swayed the hopes and affections of man in the highest moments of human progress. If we cease to think of the Spirit, we lose the inmost meaning of creed and prayer, of Church and Bible.—*Dean Stanley.*

7 It materially affects our worship and the right direction of it.

[12484] If religious practice in any measure depends upon a previous knowledge of God (as undoubtedly it does), then certainly, for the like reason, the perfection of that practice depends upon the perfection of such knowledge. A general and confused notion of God may produce as general and confused rules of demeanour towards Him; while a more particular and explicit apprehension of the Deity will of course produce a more particular and explicit service. It is true, where God has not afforded such distinct knowledge, a less perfect service may and must suffice; but wherever much is given much will be required, and from peculiar circumstances will arise peculiar obligations. If God be Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the duties owing to God will be duties under that trine distinction, which must be paid accordingly; and whoever leaves out any of the Three out of his idea of God, comes so far short of knowing God perfectly, and of serving Him in proportion to the manifestation made of Him. . . . There will be duties proper to be paid to the Father as Father, and to the Son as Son, and to the Holy Ghost as the Eternal Spirit of both; duties corresponding to their distinct offices and personalities, beside the duties common to all Three considered as One God.—*Waterland.*

8 It is a real fact in our Christian experience.

[12485] These various relationships between God and the soul are not only dogmas of Christian revelation; they are facts of Christian experience. They are all real, and they are all needful. Without any one of them, Christian life, as we have known it for the past eighteen centuries, becomes unthinkable. Yet how could the eternal Jehovah sustain toward us so many inconsistent or incompatible relationships—be at once our Brother-Man, our Spirit Indweller, our unseen Father—be judge, Reconciler, Quickener, if Jehovah our God were one Jehovah and nothing more? On the old Hebrew platform of bare monotheism all this rich Christian economy was simply impossible. Whereas these economic relations of God to saved men do naturally lie in the threefold distinction of the Trinity. They form the several functions of the several Divine Persons in the one concurrent and sublime enterprise of man's redemption.—*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

9 It is the very charter of the Church's existence.

[12486] The Church lives but by this truth; for its life is in the indwelling of Christ, and were Christ not God, His indwelling were a fable and a mockery; its life is in the abiding presence of the Spirit, and were the Spirit not a Person Divine, how were He thus universally to abide and to intercede without invading the deepest and holiest prerogatives of the Eternal God? how shall not the Church adore these as God who do for her, and are to her, all that her highest conceptions can imagine her God to be and to do? or in what terms shall she define her God which shall exclude the characters and properties that Revelation ascribes to her Sanctifier and her Redeemer? Her life is blended with the life of Christ and of the Spirit; she breathes but by these Divine ministers of the Divine Father; forsaking the blessed truth of their essential divinity she abandons the very charter of her existence.—*W. Archer Butler, M.A.*

XVI. Theories and Speculative Views regarding the Trinity.

1 Reasons why, as theologians, we cannot avoid reflecting upon the difficult points connected with this docrine.

(1) *As far as our faith is concerned.*

[12487] We must seek to unite Biblical conceptions with Biblical words, in order to guard against doubt and confirm belief.—*A. D. C. Twesten.*

(2) *As far as our reason is concerned.*

[12488] Our intellect, although it may not presume to penetrate the mysteries of the Divine nature, does yet always desire to be assured that there is nothing contradictory or self-destructive in the articles of faith which we receive.—*Ibid.*

2 The importance of speculative views of this doctrine when within right limits.

[12489] It is, if not against the letter, yet contrary to the sense of the orthodox doctrine, to exhibit the difference in the relation of the Father and the Son, to the immanent act of generation, or the relation of both these and the Holy Spirit, to the act of procession, as a relation of ability on the one side, and inability on the other, of capacity and incapacity. But when we say that the person, the *I*, is both the subject and the object of its own thinking and willing, shall we say that this relation implies, that in the one, the *I* as subject, there is a power, which is wanting in the other, the *I* as object? Equally unjust would it be, even if we call the relation of the persons a relation of dependence (the orthodox doctrine prefers to call it a relation of communication, and it is at any rate wholly different from that relation of dependence in which the world stands to God), to describe it as a partial or one-sided relation, in which the Son alone is dependent upon the Father, and to assert that there is no relation of the Father to the Son which can be brought as an equipoise. Even according to the letter of the doctrine of the Church we should be obliged to say, that just as little as the Son can be conceived of, as Son, without the Father, just so little can the Father be conceived of, as Father, without the Son; the paternity and the sonship, the *spiratio activa* and the *processio* presuppose each other. If we concede to the speculative view, the value only of a mere illustration, we shall still find it conceivable, that just as we become self-conscious persons only as we view ourselves objectively as well as subjectively (to speak with Leibnitz, as the soul from being merely a passively percipient monad, comes to a clear apprehension); so too in God, the subsistence of the eternal omnipotence, wisdom, and love, under the clearly defined relations of generation and procession, is a more perfect view of the Godhead than when we conceive of it as without any such relations, having as its only characteristic that it is unbegotten. The agency of the Spirit is, first of all, connected with the existence and agency of the Church—for the Church is the body of Christ, and the Spirit is the soul of the Church; it is also connected with the general susceptibility of the human race for Divine influences, which differs somewhat according to the endowments, the position, and the degree of religious development of different individuals and nations; and all this cannot be separated from the general direction and government of the universe. Accordingly it is stated, that as nothing has come into being without the Son, so likewise the Spirit of God in the beginning brooded upon the face of the waters. Some reference to that Divine agency, whose chief end and central purpose is the communication of redemption to the hearts of the regenerate, may be found in the whole history of man. And since redemption cannot be considered as a single Divine act, co-ordinate with creation, preservation, and government, so it is with sanctification—which one word we may use to designate this new causality. God and His general relations to us are here again to be represented by new and peculiar statements, which make it necessary for us to maintain a distinction between the Father and the Spirit. And this, again, not as if there were here a difference of nature or essence (ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο); but because the Father and the Spirit are represented as different subjects or persons, performing the same Divine acts (as ἄλλος καὶ ἄλλος). But not merely must we here distinguish the Father and the Spirit, but also the Holy Spirit and the Son. Although the indwelling of the Spirit in us is analogous to the indwelling of the Word in Christ, yet we are forced to acknowledge an essential difference in the mode of the indwelling; what in Christ was original, is in us derived; what in Him was complete and perfected, is in us incomplete and progressive; what in Him was a personal indwelling, is in us merely as members of the body of Christ, of His Church. Not only so, but that Divine influence which dwells in us cannot

possibly be considered as identical with the divinity which dwelt in Him. To maintain this identity would, on the one hand, involve such a degradation of Christ and such an exaltation of ourselves, as would make it difficult to say which of the two were the more opposed to the Christian consciousness ; whether our reverence for the Saviour, if we consider Him so wholly like to us, or our humility, if we consider ourselves as so many repeated incarnations of the Son of God, would be most impaired. And, on the other hand, it would be wholly incompatible with belief in the personality of the Word manifested in Christ. For, should we assume that the principle which became personal in Christ, after His death passed over into the Church, it would follow that the personality of this principle was a mere consequence of its union with human nature, and existed only during His earthly life ; that the *theanthropic* personality of Christ is no longer anywhere present ; and, consequently, that Jesus, if He continues to live as man, was, after His death, not exalted but humiliated. We need not stop to show how inconsistent this would be, not merely with the declarations of Scripture, but also with our own consciousness of the relation by which we are bound for all times to our heavenly High Priest and King. Thus, as the personal pre-existence of the Son makes it necessary to distinguish Him from the Father, so the personal existence of the God-man after His earthly life makes it necessary to distinguish Him from the Holy Spirit, whom He also describes as *another* Comforter or helper, whom God would send to His followers after His departure (John xiv. 16).—*Ibid.*

3 The relation of the Church's teaching respecting the doctrine of the Trinity and the right of private judgment.

[12490] The Church doctrine remains, as we said above, the regulative and corrective, not only of the popular, but also of the philosophical mode of presenting the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. And that very thing, which in other respects might be an objection to it, its negative rather than positive character makes it so much the more adapted to such a use ; since, within the assigned boundaries, it leaves room for a diversity of methods of explaining the doctrine, according to the wants of different minds, especially, if in doing so, they proceed with that liberality which keeps in view the thing itself rather than the letter. Presupposing such a regulating statement, we gladly grant a relative degree of truth and value to the varied attempts which have been made to illustrate this doctrine. And this is doubtless what has commended them to the minds of thoughtful theologians. And this, too, is an illustration of that fulness of grace and truth (John i. 16, 17) which has come to us, not merely in Christianity as a whole, but also in its separate confessions and doctrines ; that every one can look at them in the point of view which best corresponds with his wants and peculiarities ; and that error usually first enters in when it considers that aspect of the truth, in which it is first presented to his own mind, as the only one under which it can be viewed, and denies everything which does not come within his own sphere of vision.—*Ibid.*

XVII. Errors and Heresies touching the Doctrine.

1 Their origin.

(1) *Their presence was almost coeval with the revelation of truth.*

[12491] In formulating the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity, the Church, from the first, made unity of nature or essence, and trinity of persons, essential factors. No true synthesis of the inspired data can omit them. In this case, however, as in many others, the presence of error in the Church was almost coeval with the revelation of truth. Cerinthus lived with and withstood the beloved John. His main error related to the person of Christ ; by logical consequence it involved his doctrine of the Godhead. So with most of the deviations from the Church view of the Trinity : they had their logical origin in the Christology of those who started them. Sabellius conceived of Christ as having no personality before His birth in the manger, nor after His death on the cross. Arius conceived of Him as only a creature, though highly exalted. Socinius conceived of Him as a mere man, though specially endowed with extraordinary gifts. Such conceptions rendered the Trinity of the Bible and the Church impossible.—*Wm. Lord, D.D.*

(2) *The injudicious and unguarded refutation of one heresy led frequently to another.*

[12492] It is an incontestable advance in the way of looking at doctrinal differences when we consider not merely the formulas maintained, but also the general tendencies from which these differences have resulted. The angle of divergence may be very small, and the ultimate separation very wide. But with this is often connected an objectionable mode of disputation, when, in order to avoid an opinion which is seen to be extreme, we are warned against everything which seems to look that way ; for error is for the most part only an exaggeration of the truth. Certain words as Arianism, Pelagianism, Gnosticism, Dualism, are often mere bugbears, by which many a one, in seeking to avoid one extreme, is forced into errors on the opposite side, from which, if he had kept the matter itself before him, he would have been saved by a sound sense for truth. The truth is that there are few theologians equal to the task of conducting controversy successfully in regard to the more mysterious doctrines of Christianity. And we have every reason to thank God that our lot is cast in days when, by the aid of champions of the truth especially raised up, as Augustine, Athanasius, and others, the truth has been both accurately defined and carefully guarded from subtle errors, from all possible points.

2 Their leading forms.

(1) *Sabellianism.*

[12493] (1) Sabellianism takes its name from Sabellius, an ecclesiastic of Ptolemais in Africa, A.D. 250. In his teaching, God is one. The terms Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as applied to this one God, denote not persons, but manifestations or operations. In one view, or acting in one way, God is the Father. In another view, or acting in another way, God is the Son. In still another view, or acting in still another way, God is the Holy Ghost. Thus, as the Supreme Legislator, He is the Father; as the Merciful Redeemer, He is the Son; and as the efficient Renewer and Sanctifier, He is the Holy Ghost. His Trinity, therefore, was one of modes; and hence was called Modalism.

(2) Arianism is so called from the ambitious presbyter of Alexandria, Arius, A.D. 320. It freely uses the words Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but denies true and absolute Deity, except to the Father. The Son was not even begotten of the Father, but was created by Him "ek ouk ontōn"=from nothing. There was a time, therefore, when the Son did not exist. There was another time when He began to be. He was, therefore, neither self-existent nor eternal. In only a modified sense, therefore, could He be called Divine. However much such a creature might be exalted above all other creatures, the distance between Him and God must be infinite.—*Wm. Lord, D.D.*

(2) *Arianism.*

[12494] The views of Arius relative to the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, are not certain. Some represent him to have taught, that as the Son was the first-created of the Father, so the Holy Ghost was the first-created of the Son. If this representation is correct, it follows that the Spirit is not only not God, but is not equal to the Son, since that which is created cannot be equal to its creator. In strictness of speech, then, Arianism has no Trinity. Its God is one, in being and person. The Son and Spirit, indeed, are not mere manifestations, or operations: they are persons. They are however created, and therefore not Divine.—*Ibid.*

(2) *Socinianism.*

[12495] Socinianism is so called from the two Socini, Loelius and Faustus, of the sixteenth century. It not only has no Trinity, but chooses rather to be called anti-Trinitarian. At first it attempted to connect with the person of Christ something of superiority and dignity above other men; but its true logical result has long since been reached, and Socinianism now holds as follows, viz: that—

1. God is one, without distinction of nature or person;

2. The Holy Spirit is an attribute or energy of God; and

3. Jesus Christ was and is a mere Man.—*Ibid.*

XVIII. Common Objections raised against the Catholic Faith touching the Trinity.

1 That the doctrine is mysterious and incomprehensible.

(1) *First reply: the mysteriousness of the doctrine should not be a ground of doubt or difficulty.*

[12496] Respecting the doctrines to be believed, it is objected that they are mysterious; they relate to persons and things in another world, which are therefore hidden from us. What, then, is to be done? Why, certainly, we must believe the account which God, by His prophets and apostles, has been pleased to give us. and we must form our notions of them, as well as we can, by comparison with those things which are the objects of our senses. Our state, with regard to God and the glories of His heavenly kingdom, is exactly like the state of a blind man with regard to the sun and the light thereof. He cannot see the sun or the light that issues from it; yet he would be unreasonable should he refuse to believe what his friends, who do see it, tell him concerning it; though, after all, they can give him but a very poor, imperfect idea of it. If it pleased God to open his eyes and bestow on him the blessing of sight he would know more of the matter in one single moment than description, study, and meditation could have taught him in a hundred years, or a thousand years, or ten thousand years. Such is our case. We cannot see God; we cannot see the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; we cannot see how they are three, and how they are one. But shall we therefore, in opposition to the authority and word of God Himself, deny that they are so? We may reason and dispute upon the subject for ages; but in that instant, when we are admitted to His presence, and "see Him as He is," every doubt and difficulty will vanish at once, and we shall know—how little we *did* know, or possibly *could* know before.

Tell a blind man your sight can travel over the space of one hundred millions of miles as soon as it can move the distance of ten yards, how full of absurdity, contradiction, and impossibility must this assertion appear to him, who can perceive of motion only in slow succession! yet it is a certain truth; for let a person be led forth, in a clear night, with his eyes closed; on opening them he will see the remotest star in the firmament that can be seen at all as soon as he will see a candle at the distance only of a few yards from him.

This instance may serve to show how very ill qualified we are to dispute with our Maker concerning His own nature and existence, and the things of another and invisible world. Of the truth of revelation we have the most decisive evidence, of the senses, in the miracles wrought by Christ and His apostles, of which the eyes and ears of men were sufficient judges. Knowing, therefore, assuredly that God hath spoken, and giving diligent attention to that which He hath spoken, it is our part, at present, to believe

what we shall one day be permitted to see.—*Horne*, 1730-1792.

[12497] A distinction in the Divine nature, inconceivable by us but plainly revealed in terms, must be admitted upon the testimony and authority of Him who alone can instruct us in what we are concerned to know of His adorable essence. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" (1 John v. 7). To each of these three the perfections of Deity are attributed and ascribed in various parts of Scripture. Each of them therefore is God; and yet we are sure, both from Scripture and reason, there is, there can be, but one God. Thus far we can go safely; and that we can go no farther, that our thoughts are lost and overwhelmed if we attempt to represent to ourselves how or in what manner three are one, and one are three, may be easily accounted for if any just reason can be given why a worm cannot comprehend infinity. Let us first, if we can, account for the nature, essence, and properties of the things with which, as to their effects, we are familiarly acquainted. Let us explain the growth of a blade of grass, or the virtues of the loadstone. Till we are able to do this, it becomes us to lay our hands upon our mouths, and our mouths in the dust.—*Newton*, 1725-1807.

[12498] These are notions which may well puzzle our reason in conceiving how they agree, but ought not to stagger our faith in asserting that they are true; for if the Holy Scripture teacheth us plainly, and frequently doth inculcate upon us that there is but one true God; if it as manifestly doth ascribe to the three Persons of the blessed Trinity the same august names, the same peculiar characters, the same Divine attributes, the same superlatively admirable operations of creation and providence; if it also doth prescribe to them the same supreme honours, services, praises, and acknowledgments to be paid to them all—this may be abundantly enough to satisfy our minds, to stop our mouths, to smother all doubt and dispute about this high and holy mystery.—*I. Barrow, D.D.*

[12499] We are all surrounded by mysteries from which there is no escape, even in atheism itself, still less in any milder form of disbelief. The advance of science multiplies rather than diminishes them. As we read the results of modern investigation and research we seem to hear the Almighty repeating the challenge given long ago: "Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds?" "Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?" "Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich?" Wilt thou play with leviathan as with a bird? or bind him for thy maidens? (Job xxxvii. 16, &c.) Now if in the domain of sense we are surrounded with the inscrutable, why rebel against it in the region of faith? For our part we accept these mysteries as inevitable. —*D. Osborn.*

(2) *Second reply: the difficulties raised by the orthodox view are not peculiar to that view.*

[12500] They equally embarrass every system of religion, and the Unitarian not less than any other. They are inherent in the subject of the Divine nature, as contemplated by man's limited faculties. Take, as an instance, the unity of the Deity, respecting which Unitarians say so much. What idea of unity have we, as applied to the nature of the Divine Being? Even in the most ordinary cases the idea of unity, or oneness, has almost always an obscurity in it, to our understandings. And if this be so as to human affairs, how much more is it the case as respects the eternal, incomprehensible Jehovah? We know nothing of the oneness of a spiritual, infinite being. Nor does Scripture afford us any information on the subject. We can only form a negative conception of it: that there are no other Gods but one. But of the abstract, essential unity of the Deity, we are destitute of all definite conception. Again, how can the Deity be said to be a substance, a person, &c.? or, as He is represented in Scripture, to "see," to "hear," to "walk," to "repent," to "be grieved?" Does not such language suppose the inadequacy of our faculties to the vastness of the subject? And does it not condescend to the feebleness of our apprehensions? Does the Unitarian pretend to explain how the Deity exists throughout all space and from all eternity? And yet will he not abandon the fact because he is unable to explain it, or even to define his own conviction of it.—*E. J. Evans, M.A.*

(3) *Third reply: the mysteriousness of the doctrine is due to our ignorance and the imperfection of our present powers.*

[12501] By asserting the Trinity and Incarnation to be mysteries the apostles teach us that it has pleased God to give us an actual external object in His own nature, consisting of features and characteristics, which in our present state we are unable to harmonize, but which faith in Him, who bestows them, assures us will eventually resolve themselves into one consistent whole. Such has been the case already in a great measure respecting the world of matter; such will no doubt be the case hereafter respecting the world of mind. Various incongruities in the external universe, which perplexed Lucretius, have been cleared up by Newton and Davy; and those incompatibilities which were suggested by Arius and Sabellius will prove hereafter to be equally illusory. The individual truths respecting God which we learn from revelation must therefore be held as firmly as the individual phenomena which we learn from observation. We cannot expect that in our present state we can perfectly harmonize them. What we should aim at is, to discern the limits which have been laid down on either side, without endeavouring to draw them

together forcibly by the bond of a logical connection.—*Archdeacon Wilberforce.*

[12502] If he denies that three can be predicated of one, and one of three, let him allow that there is something in God which his intellect cannot penetrate, and let him not compare the nature of God, which is above all things free from all condition of place and time and composition of parts, with things which are confined to place and time, or composed of parts; but let him believe that there is something in that nature which cannot be in those things, and let him acquiesce in Christian authority, and not dispute against it.—*Anselm.*

2 **That the doctrine of the Trinity is contrary to reason and self-contradiction.**

(1) *Reply.*

[12503] It is an abstract and self-evident truth that one is not three, and that three are not one. It is an abstract and self-evident truth that no being can be one and three at the same time and in the same sense; and, therefore, to affirm this, would be to contradict a self-evident proposition, and to maintain a palpable absurdity. But this is not the doctrine of the Trinity, nor does it bear any semblance to it. The doctrine that in the Godhead there are distinctions in personal consciousness, combined with identity of nature and attributes, is nothing more than to affirm that a being may be singular in one sense and plural in another; and this involves no contradiction. It is perfectly consistent with abstract truth, and is illustrated by actual truth: we have numerous illustrations of it in the phenomena of Nature. In the constitution of a human being we have a conjunction of unity and plurality. A human being is one, but his nature is twofold.—*W. Cooke, D.D.*

[12504] All attempts, however, to show that this great doctrine implies a contradiction have failed. A contradiction is only where two contraries are predicated of the same thing and in the same respect. Let this be kept in view, and the sophisms resorted to on this point by the adversaries of the faith will be easily detected. They urge that the same thing cannot be three and one, that is (if the proposition has any meaning at all), not in the same respect; the three persons are not one person, and the one God is not three Gods. But it is no contradiction to say that in different respects the three may be one; that is, that in respect of persons they shall be three, and in respect of Godhead, essence, or nature they shall be one. The manner of the thing is a perfectly distinct question, and its incomprehensibility proves nothing but that we are finite creatures and not God.—*R. Watson.*

3 **That a Trinity in unity is *à priori* impossible.**

(1) *Reply.*

[12505] We are not competent judges of the fact: and whether any one may think himself competent or not, he has no evidence to prove its impossibility. We, therefore, who believe it, presume not to determine anything beforehand on its possibility or impossibility; but, as we are conscious that the Divine Being is very imperfectly understood by us, and that the existence of the three Persons in the one undivided Godhead may, for anything we do know, be perfectly consistent with that which we do not know of Him, we believe the fact on the evidence of Scripture; and the fact being established on that evidence, we cannot but see that the possibility of it is established at the same time.—*J. S. L. Vogan, M.A.*, 1837.

XIX. Modern Rationalistic and Scientifically Stated Objections to the Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity.

1 **First objection. The Church has merely personified what was only a threefold way of regarding God.**

(1) *Objection stated more in detail.*

[12506] There are three modes in which, from the nature of our intellects, we may consider the object itself as a whole; we may consider the form which unites together the different parts of this whole; or we may consider the matter which is thus united, of which this whole is made up. Thus the whole idea of God is expressed in this threefold relation. We conceive of Him, in the first place, as the absolutely independent substance, the pure ideal of the reason; secondly, in relation to the world, we conceive of Him as the Being through whom the world exists, who has given to it existence and laws and forms; and, in the third place, in relation to nature (that is, to the powers which are held together by this form, and to the phenomena which are caused by these laws), we think of God as the source of all light and life. Thus we have a threefold view of the Godhead which contains all that is true in the doctrine of the Trinity. God as the absolutely independent substance is the Father; God as the author of the world and its laws is the Son; God as giving life to nature, as the living source of its manifold phenomena, is the Holy Ghost. And the doctrine of the Trinity as it exists in the Church is only a misapprehension or misapplication of this necessary and philosophical view of the Godhead.—*A. D. C. Twesten.*

(2) *First reply: the distinction between the second and third mode of viewing the Divine nature cannot be shown to be necessary and philosophical.*

[12507] Here is a broad distinction between God as He exists in Himself, and God as the Creator of the world; not so broad is the distinction between God as the author of the world, and God as ever acting in the world. It may be well, in order to remove all dualistic notions, as though God and the world were entirely independent existences, to speak of Him as im-

manent in nature, as not only the source of the powers and laws of nature, but as also ever acting in and through these powers. But, at the best, this expresses simply a distinction in the mode of the Divine operations; it does not bring into view any new attributes or powers of the Godhead; nor does it present any wholly different view of the mode in which these attributes are manifested. Under the general notion of the relation of the world to God as its Creator, we are obliged to bring *all* the attributes of God. And when we consider God as the cause of nature, we are also obliged to consider this causality as immanent in all His works. It may be a matter of convenience, it may assist us in forming some conception of the universality and omnipresence of the Divine agency, if we make such a distinction; but it is not a matter of philosophical necessity.—*Ibid.*

(3) *Second reply: when we make this constant presence of God in His works, this immanence of the Creator in the creation, to be the same thing as what is meant when we speak of the Holy Ghost, we are doing violence to Scripture language as to the whole analogy of the Christian faith.*

[12508] God as the source of all life and phenomena in nature is one thing; God as the Holy Ghost is an entirely different conception. In the Holy Ghost we have indeed the idea of the Divine immanence expressed; but the specific idea is that of the dwelling of God in His children, it is the relation in which He stands to the regenerate. He who has been redeemed by Christ and sanctified, and elevated to communion with God, of him it is said that God comes to him and dwells in him (John xiv. 23); he is in God and God in him (John xvii. 21); he is a temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17). There are indeed passages of the Old Testament in which the operations of God in nature are described as the action of the Spirit of God; yet even there, especially in the prophetical parts, this phraseology is chiefly employed when some relation to the kingdom of God in the special sense is intended. In the New Testament, however, this word, the Spirit of God, is almost exclusively used to describe that principle of a higher life which is at work in believers. And it belongs to the very genius of Christianity to make here a broad distinction. The whole peculiarity of our faith rests upon the contrast between what we designate as nature and what we designate as grace. And precisely because we acknowledge the indwelling of the Spirit of God in the regenerate we cannot acknowledge it in what is not regenerate. The two express things wholly diverse.—*Ibid.*

(4) *Third reply: it does not express the essential points in the doctrine of the Trinity, and especially the Christian conception of this doctrine.*

[12509] Even if we should concede, contrary to what the Church has always maintained and enforced with the clearest consciousness, that there is nothing in the nature of God to warrant this threefold distinction, that it has no objective value, but is only a philosophical way of thinking about God; if we should grant that this doctrine was derived from a principle foreign to Christianity, or even opposed to it, that is, from the mythologizing spirit of the ancient world; still we say, that in this doctrine as held by the Church we have very different conceptions and statements in respect to the Godhead from those which are brought to view in this philosophical analysis. The relations are different; the subjects are different. According to this philosophy we should have the following scheme: The Father, or God considered in His absolute independence, is the infinite, eternal, unconditioned substance, beyond and above the world, self-satisfying; God, considered in His relation to the world, or the Son, is the omniscient, omnipotent, benevolent and holy Creator, preserver and governor of the world; God, considered in His relation to nature, or the Spirit, is omnipresent, penetrating everything, co-operating in all and with all. But are these the distinguishing predicates by which Christianity represents the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? The conceptions which lie at the foundation of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity are wholly diverse from any such philosophical divisions and statements. It is indeed true that we believe, as the Nicene Creed expresses it, that everything was created by the Son; but the Father is also declared to be the almighty maker of the heavens and the earth. Nor can we say that the Son is precisely equivalent to God revealed in the world, nor the Holy Ghost to God acting in nature; but the Son is He who has redeemed us; the Holy Ghost is He who sanctifies us. In other words, we are to seek the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity in that which constitutes the peculiarity of the Christian system, that it is a scheme of redemption. It is in our conscious experience of this redemption, considering this consciousness as connected with the whole Christian scheme, that we find the true basis for this doctrine. We cannot find it in the different relations which God sustains to the world, nor can we reach it by any philosophical division we may make of God's natural attributes, nor by any reflection upon our natural and necessary conceptions of God. It is not in Natural Theology, it is not in the general relation of God to the world, that we are to seek the basis of the Trinity; it is found only in connection with the Christian system of redemption.—*Ibid.*

2 Second objection. The Scriptures seldom or never speak of the divinity of the Son and of the Holy Ghost by themselves.

(1) *Objection stated more in detail.*

[12510] In conformity with the whole character of the Bible, which is practical rather than strictly doctrinal, which is directed rather to the Christian life than to knowledge as such, it almost everywhere speaks of the Word in his

human manifestation, and of the Spirit as acting in our minds; so that in its statements, the glory of the divinity (δόξα τῆς θειότητος) appears mitigated by the human form (σχῆμα ἀνθρωπίνον) in which it is exhibited. If Arian and Semi-Arian conceptions thus seem to be favoured, we must bear in mind that there cannot in truth be any middle term between God and a created being. If then we find that Christ and the Holy Spirit are spoken of in a way which raises them above the rank of creatures; if predicates are given to them, and a religious reverence paid to them, or sentiments and feelings expressed towards them, such as are befitting God only, we must then also regard them as having a truly Divine nature.—*Ibid.*

(2) *Twesten's reply.*

[12511] The doctrine of the Church is equally removed from tritheism and from modalism. With respect to tritheism, the objection may be stated in the words which De Wette quotes from Ammon's "Summa": "An individual and intelligent substance (which is the definition of person) ought also to have an individual will belonging to himself alone, and if so, then there remains little or no distinction between person and nature." We grant this fully so far as this, that a Divine person thought of concretely is not something really distinct from the nature of God, and that it must have the Divine will as well as all the other attributes in common; but from this, too, it is clear that, in addition to the will, which is comprehended in the essence of the Godhead, we ought not to speak also of a will as belonging to any single person in the Godhead as a special will. Just as, according to the Athanasian Creed, though Father, Son, and Spirit are almighty, "there are not three Almighties, but one Almighty:" so, though Father, Son, and Spirit are intelligent subjects, and therefore subjects endowed with will, yet we cannot speak of three wills, but only of one will of God, which will, however, as the nature of God in general, has a threefold subsistence; that is, is to be conceived of under a threefold relation. And although, again, these relations of the Divine nature are distinguished only by reason (*distinctione rationis*), yet it does not follow from this that the doctrine of the Church is modalistic.

3 **Third objection. Between the two views, tritheism and modalism, we remain in suspense.**

(1) *Twesten's reply.*

[12512] The objection, that between the two views, tritheism and modalism, we remain as it were in suspense, is so far not without foundation, as it is certainly difficult for us to bring together the unity and the threeness in one thought. But is this, then, absolutely requisite? Is this the only case in which it is necessary or advisable to bring the apparently conflicting elements or aspects of the truth in separate parts before our minds, and to see their unity in the fact that each element demands and leads to the other as the complement of itself? There is at least one such case, the relation of our free actions to the Divine foreordination and co-operation. Here also it is difficult for us to conceive of the same action as dependent upon a free determination of the will by virtue of which it could be other than it is, and at the same time as dependent upon God's decree, in which it is comprehended as the definite action which it is, and no other. Here we are obliged to separate two points of view, that of contemplation, in which the consciousness of our dependence upon God preponderates, and that of practical conviction, in which the consciousness of our free self-determination preponderates. The unity of the two, however, must be necessarily presupposed and held fast, since in each of them we have only one aspect of a truth which is completed only by the other. Thus it is here also. There are first of all different elements of religious consciousness in which we encounter the unity and the threeness; the former in our general sense of the equal dependence of all things upon God; the latter in our conscious experience of redemption through Christ. But since in the Christian mind these elements are constantly interchanged and intermingled, it is impossible for us to hold fast to the unity or to the threeness alone. If we first think of God as absolutely one, as the original ground of the manifold forms of things, yet the speculative development of the idea of revelation and of a personal and intelligent being compels us to make a distinction in the relations which this one original being bears to himself and to the world; or if speculation does not lead us to do this, yet will a living Christian consciousness compel us to advance from the feeling of general dependence to that of our special dependence as exhibited in the higher life which we have received from Christ, and accordingly to make the distinction in God of Father, Son, and Spirit. If, on the other hand, we begin with the consciousness of redemption, and of the connection inseparable from this, of our new life with the agency of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, with, through, and in whom we are reconciled and made partakers of the fulness of truth and grace (John i. 16, 17), and if we see that these three must be conceived of as having a truly Divine nature, we need then only to get a clear conception of what it means to have a Divine nature in order at once to see that this nature must necessarily have a unity, and, consequently, that the distinction of the three Persons must be expressed in such a way as to show that they are not in fact something independent of this one nature, or inconsistent with its unity. Thus it is, as a Father of the Church has somewhere said, that the one light of the Divine essence separates itself before our eyes into three flames, and these flow together again into one light; in this perpetual transition and movement the religious consciousness has its life. And this is what the doctrine of the Church expresses in its way, even as De Wette has it: when any one thinks himself brought by

this doctrine near to a tritheistic conception of the Godhead, it speaks against any dismemberment of the Divine nature in a way that would seem to lead to a modalistic view of the Trinity; and yet it avoids this again by other distinctions, in which it enforces the objective character of the personal distinctions in the Godhead. We cannot succeed in transforming what is mobile into an inflexible and fixed image, not because we have not the appropriate definitions and conceptions, but because we have not an adequate and living vision (our own self-consciousness as we have said furnishes us with an analogy); but this must be wanting to us because we are not God Himself, and so far this doctrine necessarily remains a mystery. "No one knows the Father but the Son, and no one the Son but the Father" (Matt. xi. 27); but we must receive with faith what the Son has revealed to us.

4 Fourth objection. The plurality existing in God Himself according to the teaching of the Church seems to lead to the notion of a certain composition in the Divine nature, as though it were made up of parts.

(1) *Twesten's reply.*

[12513] We should indeed gain little if we maintained the unity of God, and yet in order to do this we are obliged to give up the simplicity of the Divine nature, which is an equally necessary idea. But here we apply the canon: *relationes non componunt sed distinguunt;* or, to express it in more general terms, as distinctions do not involve a separation into parts, so the unity of what is distinguished does not consist in its being made up of parts. When we distinguish the clearness of the light, and the definite degree of the clearness, we do not thereby say that the light is something compounded of the clearness and its degree. "Composition is only between one thing and another thing, but a relation is not a thing, but only a mode of a thing, therefore a relation cannot be compounded; *e.g.*, degree in colour does not compose the colour, nor degree in whiteness the whiteness, because the degree of colour or whiteness is not a different thing from the colour or whiteness, but only a mode of the colour or whiteness." Our *I* does not cease to be simple because the notion of it presupposes the distinction of subject and object, and the knowledge that it is both. And, what comes nearer to the point, if we find that we can distinguish the several attributes of God without detriment to the Divine simplicity, why may we not equally distinguish His different internal relations without conflicting with the same notion? For what we have before remarked applies also here, that the distinguishing of them from the Divine essence is a *distinctio.* The question whether in truth a certain plurality cannot consist with the Divine simplicity is one which has been answered affirmatively by many persons, and that not merely in our times. Thus Lessing says: "What if this doctrine (the Trinity) were meant to bring the human understanding in the way of seeing that God cannot possibly be *one* in the sense in which finite things are *one*, that also His unity must be a transcendental unity which does not exclude a kind of plurality?" In our own times there are, as is well known, many who adopt the philosophical position, that the highest unity is to be conceived of as the identity of unity and manifoldness; from which it follows that the simplicity of this unity does not consist in its having no internal distinctions, but approves itself by alternately making and revoking these distinctions. Apart, however, from these speculations, we may say that we cannot make to ourselves a better conception of this attribute, considering it not merely negatively but also positively, than when we distinguish God from God in order to comprehend Him as the Being who is eternally in Himself and like Himself alone.

5 Fifth objection. With the Church's representation of the doctrine of the Trinity we cannot keep clear of the notion of a plurality, of compounding, and of such relations in the Divine nature as destroy the idea of God as an absolute Being.

(1) *Twesten's reply.*

[12514] In the first place as to a plurality in the Divine nature. The scholastics had much to say of the relation of number to the Divine unity since Boethius had put forth the canon: *vere unum esse, in quo nullus sit numerus.* Peter the Lombard sought to avoid the difficulty by saying that number in its application to God and Divine things had only a negative meaning: "these things are rather said to exclude what is not in God than to assert what is" (Sentent. lib. I. dist. 24). He thought that when we speak of one God, one Father, one Son, we only mean to exclude the notion that there are several such; and when we speak of several Divine persons we only exclude the *singularitas et solitudo.* When we say that there are in God three Persons this only means that not the Father alone, and also not merely the Father and Son, but that Father, Son, and Spirit are to be reverenced as having a Divine nature; besides these, however, no other. Although this position was much contested and limited, yet it is found even in the later scholastics (*e.g.*, Aquinas, Summa. P. I. quaest. 30, art. 3). The Lutheran theologians, after Hutter's example (Loc. de Trin. Pers. prop. IV. p. 102), rejected it; to keep themselves from Sabellianism they thought that they ought not to give up anything of the threeness. And we can certainly do very well without this, as well as other scholastic means of avoiding the difficulty if, instead of entangling ourselves in the abstract categories of number and unity, we hold on to the simple and concrete truth, that the plurality of relations does not destroy the unity of essence. In the very exclusion of number from the Godhead we may find the real significancy of the unity of God. By denying to Him all number, we ascribe to Him absolute unity. But this unity is still an

immanent attribute of the Divine nature. Its meaning is this, that the nature of God is not capable of a reduplication, is not to be regarded as a generic notion which includes under itself many or several individuals. But this position is not only not denied but is expressly asserted in the doctrine of the Trinity ; for how can we, from a difference in relations, infer that there are several natures? So far, then, as there is a plurality contained in the idea of the Trinity, it is not opposed to that unity which belongs to an absolute being, but, if we may make use of the expression, to that solitude or singleness of existence (*solitudo*, *singularitas*) with which we should find it difficult to unite the conception of a God, living and blessed, independent of creation.

6 Sixth objection. The relations which the doctrine of the Trinity ascribes to the Godhead destroy the idea that God is an absolute Being.

(1) *Twesten's reply.*

[12515] This can have a double meaning. Either it is found at variance with the idea of the absolute nature of God, to conceive of Him under such relations as those of generation and procession ; or, it is doubted whether the absolute Divine nature is actually attributed to the single Persons when it is attributed to them under certain relations to the exclusion of others (it is thought, *e.g.*, that if the Son is to be conceived of as generated, He cannot be called God in the absolute sense in which the Father is, who is conceived of as generating). The first form of the objection we could not concede to be valid, even if we were speaking only of the external relations of God to the world and to the revelation of Himself in the world ; for here, although God be absolute, yet the doctrinal definitions respecting His nature and attributes must be based upon the contrast and dependence which we find to exist in the relations between God and the world. That is, though God be absolute, yet we are obliged to think of Him as having certain relations. Still less will the objection hold in respect to the Trinity, for here we are speaking chiefly of the internal relations of the Divine essence to itself; and, without such relations, it is impossible for us to have any clear conception of the fundamental definition of what is absolute, viz., that it exists only through itself, for itself, and in itself.

(2) *Poiret's reply.*

[12516] The Divine simplicity of the essence of God, so far from excluding, necessarily includes, the great mystery of the Trinity. For an intelligent and perfect being which could not have the idea of the essential likeness of itself (which is the Son) would not be a simple being, but a being whose thought would be divided from itself by ignorance ; as, too, this being would be divided from itself by indifference if it did not have in itself a love for itself necessarily and eternally springing up. But, further, this same intelligence or knowledge and this essential love of God would not be simple, but necessarily divided, if they were to be necessarily employed upon anything else than the Divine nature and essence alone. If there were out of God any other idea, truth, goodness, independent of God, to which God ought necessarily to give His knowledge and His love, the intelligence of God and His love would not be naturally simple, but they would be necessarily shared and dispersed among other things than the pure essence of God.

PART II.

THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION C.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF CREATION.

SYLLABUS.

		PAGE
I.	Definitions of Creation	320
II.	Theories of Creation	320
III.	Its Ascription to the Three Persons of the Godhead	321
IV.	Biblical Doctrine and Geological Science	321
V.	Superiority of the Biblical to other Cosmogonies	322
VI.	Analogy between the Works of God and the Works of Man	322
VII.	Evolution as related to the Creation	323
VIII.	The Plan of the World	323
IX.	The Biblical Record of Creation	325
X.	The System of Nature in the Universe specially considered	329
XI.	Special Characteristics of the Divine Work	340
XII.	The Purpose of Creation Generally	340
XIII.	The Divine Attributes implied in the Act	342
XIV.	The Consummation of the Perfect Plan of the World in the Creation of Man	343
XV.	Man's Threefold Constituency of Body, Soul, and Spirit Distinctively and Conjointly considered	347
XVI.	The Institution of Natural Law in Divine Government	354
XVII.	The World of Spirits Generally	361
XVIII.	The Angelic Host	364
XIX.	The Powers of Darkness and the Dominion of Satan	370

THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION C.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF CREATION.

I. Definitions of Creation.

1 Creation is the absolute bringing into existence of the world by God.

[12517] It is that act of God by which He, standing before and above all mundane and natural things, made and arranged the universe. It embraces everything which is not God.—*J. F. Hurst, D.D.*

[12518] Creation is the power of God causing beings and things to spring into existence from nothing, and thus filling immensity with the works of His hand. The creations of man (as they are termed) are wonderful. But they are confined to casting into new forms, and bringing into original combinations, materials furnished to his hands. He cannot originate a single particle of that matter upon which he exercises his skill. The power of causing something to exist from nothing belongs to Omnipotence alone.—*W. C. Wisner.*

[12519] Creation is not something rising up out of absolute nonentity. It assumes existence *in one form*, it supposes Being, Being infinite and eternal—but only this. As the act of the eternal One, creation is not the bringing of something *out of* nothing, as if nothing were either the material or the place out of which something is brought. It is not the conversion of nothing into something, as if nothing were a kind of substratum on which the Infinite Power acted. But, so far as we are capable of conceiving and embodying it, creation is "causing existence to begin;" an instant ago, it is supposed, there was absolutely nothing save the Infinite Life, but *this instant* something else has begun to be.—*J. Young, LL.D.*

II. Theories of Creation.

1 The Deistic.

[12520] The Deist so far agrees with the Christian as to admit that God is related to the world as its Creator; and that He must have made it out of nothing by the fiat of His will. But with this admission—momentous as it is—the old Deism practically closes its account of God's free personal action upon His work. Since the creation, God's action is represented as being practically superseded by a system of unchangeable routine; and this routine is conceived to be so strictly invariable as to bind the liberty of the presumed Agent. The Deistic theory of the universe might remind us of the relations which, at least until some very recent events, were understood to exist between the Government of Egypt and the Sublime Porte. There was occasionally a formal recognition of the sovereign power on the part of the nominal dependency, but Egypt was governed by a practically independent viceroy; the suzerain's name was mentioned rarely, or only in a formal way; his active influence would have been at once resented, the real power being lodged elsewhere. According to the old Deism, God created the world; but He cannot be supposed ever to interfere with the ordinary laws of its government. He cannot work miracles; He is, in no tangible sense, a Providence. He is well out of the way of active human interests: it is not to be supposed that He can hear the prayer of a worm writhing on one of His planets; that the happiness or misfortunes of a larger sort of animalculæ can give Him any real concern.—*Canon Liddon.*

2 The atomic.

[12521] We must be informed how the universe came to be a universe; how it came to have a unity which underlies its diversity; if it resulted from a countless multitude of ultimate causes. Did the atoms take counsel together, and devise a common plan and work it out? That hypothesis is unspeakably absurd, and yet it is rational in comparison with the notions that these atoms combined by mere chance, and by chance produced such a universe as that in which we live. Grant all the atoms of matter to be eternal, grant all the properties and forces which with the smallest degree of probability can be claimed for them to be eternal and immutable, and it is still beyond all expression improbable that these atoms with these forces, if unarranged, uncombined, ununified, unutilized by a presiding mind, would give rise to anything entitled to be called a universe. It is millions to one that they would never produce the simplest of the regular arrangements which we

comprehend under the designation of the course of nature, or the lowest of vegetable or animal organism ; millions of millions to one that they would never produce a solar system, the earth, the animal kingdom, or human history. No number of material atoms, although eternal and endowed with mechanical force, can explain the unity and order of the universe, and therefore the supposition of their existence, does not free us from the necessity of believing in a single intelligent cause—a supreme mind—to move and mould, combine and adjust, the ultimate atoms of matter into a single orderly system.—*Prof. Flint* (*condensed*).

III. Its Ascription to the Three Persons of the Godhead.

[12522] Creation is ascribed to each Person of the Trinity ; to God absolutely, Gen. i. 1 ; the Father, 1 Cor. viii. 6 ; the Son, John i. 3 ; Col. i. 16, 17 ; Heb. i. 3 ; the Holy Spirit, Gen. i. 3 ; Job xxvi. 13 ; Psa. civ. 30 (cf. the three divisions of the Nicene Creed).—*G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

IV. Biblical Doctrine and Geological Science.

1 Their comparison.

[12523] In the present condition of geological science, and with the great obscurity of the record of creation in Gen. i., it may be wise not to attempt an accurate comparison of the one with the other. Some few points, however, seem clearly to come out. In Genesis, first of all, creation is spoken of as "in the beginning," a period of indefinite, possibly of most remote distance in the past ; secondly, the progress of the preparation of the earth's surface is described as gradually advancing from the rocks to the vegetable world, and the less perfectly organized animal creation, then gradually mounting up through birds and mammals, till it culminates in man. This is the course of creation as popularly described in Genesis, and the rocks give their testimony, at least in general, to the same order and progress. The chief difference, if any, of the two witnesses would seem to be, that the Rocks speak of (1) marine plants, (2) marine animals, (3) land plants, (4) land animals in their successive developments ; whereas Moses speaks of (1) plants, (2) marine animals, (3) land animals ; a difference not amounting to divergence. As physiology must have been nearly, and geology wholly unknown to the Semitic nations of antiquity, such a general correspondence of sacred history with modern science is surely more striking and important than any apparent difference in details. Efforts have been made to compare the Indian cosmogony with the Biblical, which utterly fail. The cosmogony of the Hindoos is thoroughly adapted to their pantheistic theology ; the Hebrew corresponding with the pure personal monotheism of the Old Testament. The only important resemblance of any ancient cosmogony with the Scriptural account is to be found in the Persian or Zoroastrian.—*Bp. Harold Browne.*

2 Their harmony.

(1) *The Scripture doctrine is not at variance with science itself, but with the ever varying scientific guesses.*

[12524] There is not one fact—one observed phenomenon of geology—that has the slightest conflict with any statement of the Scriptures. The conflict is between the guesses of geologists as to the cause of the phenomena, or their age, or relative order of succession. There is not one geologic hypothesis now accepted that has stood the test of a score of years. There is not one geologic theory or hypothesis that may not be overturned to-morrow by the discovery of some phenomenon or fact now unknown. Over one hundred years ago the French Association of Science published a list of over eighty geologic hypotheses that had been accepted for a time and then exploded and abandoned. Over twenty years ago Lyell added fifty to the list, and as many have followed since that time. We can safely say that within the last one hundred and fifty years over one hundred and fifty theories or speculations have been suggested as hypotheses in geology and exploded and abandoned. Many of these were the fundamental ideas of geology in their day, and were urged as established scientific truths, and most of them were arrayed against the Scriptures, and men were arrogantly called upon to cast to one side the faith of ages because it did not accord with these guesses that their advocates have since abandoned, and some of which they would blush to have attributed to them. These conflicting, changing, inconsistent speculations have each tried to act usurper in its ephemeral moment of existence, and then given place to some new pretender.—*Clark Braden.*

[12525] The Bible, in its very first word, affirms a beginning. Science also, when closely examined, points not obscurely to the same truth. Both exclude, as a mere figment, the idea of a succession of past ages of time, strictly infinite, a view which strives to escape from a Divine mystery, only to involve us in a direct contradiction of sound reason.—*T. R. Birks.*

[12526] There is, account for it as we may, a general correspondence between the record in the Bible and the record in stone. My friend Hugh Miller may not have been able to point out an identity in every minute particular ; but he has certainly established a general congruity. There is an order and there is a progression very much the same in both. In both there is light before the sun appears. In Genesis, the fiat goes forth, "Let there be light, and there was light" the first day, and the sun comes forth only the fourth — in accordance with science, which tells us that the earth was thrown off ages before the sun had become condensed into the centre of the planetary system. In both, the inanimate comes before the

animate ; in both, the grass and herb and tree, before the animal ; in both, fishes and fowls, before creeping things and cattle. In both we have, as the last of the train, man standing upright, and facing the sky ; made of the dust of the ground, and yet filled with the inspiration of God. Such is the correspondence between science and Scripture. You will find no such correspondence between modern discovery and any work of heathen mythology, Eastern or Western. *Prima facie*, there must be a great truth in that opening chapter of Genesis, which has anticipated geology by three thousand years. —*J. McCosh, D.D.*

[12527] 1. The Bible recognizes the intimate connection shown by science to subsist between the parts constituting the material universe. 2. Scripture teaches what all sober science affirms, and what atheistic theories do not disprove, that the universe is not eternal, but had a beginning both as to matter and form. 3. Reason and science unite in testifying that the universe is the effect of an adequate cause, one intelligent and powerful. The Scripture teaches that that cause is the all-wise and all-powerful God. 4. Although not eternal, the material universe, as now constituted, is scientifically demonstrated to be of vast antiquity. The Bible nowhere assigns a date to the origin of the world. 5. The order of successive creations in Genesis is on the whole the order of geology. 6. Both agree that life once begun has ever since been continued without pause or interruption. 7. Both affirm that man's appearance is of comparatively recent date ; and 8. That with the introduction of man creation came to a close. This striking similarity cannot be the result of accident ; and it would be equally preposterous to attribute to Moses or his contemporaries any knowledge of physical science ; and yet the author writes in a way unattainable even by philosophers until within a recent period, and as if acquainted with the sciences of the present day. The harmony above traced is explicable only on the principle that the Creator Himself is the author and source of this record of the production of this almighty power.—*D. Macdonald, M.A.* (*condensed*).

V. Superiority of the Biblical to other Cosmogonies.

[12528] 1. *Coincidences.* (1) Intimations of a primeval darkness corresponding to the "darkness on the face of the deep." (2) An unarranged chaos—an empty, desolate waste, "without form and void." (3) The preponderance of water in connection with this state of things. (4) The widely spread notions concerning the *mundane egg*, evidently connected with "the Spirit *brooded* on the face of the waters," from which probably originated the designation of the Spirit as a *dove*. (5) The advance from the imperfect to the higher and more perfect forms. (6) The origin of animals from the earth, and man's likeness to the Lord's. How are these coincidences to be accounted for? Not on the hypotheses of (1) accident, or (2) the nature of the case, or (3) the Bible, because the traditions are found among nations far beyond its range, reaching back to the remotest times, but (4) in the theory of a primeval tradition extending back to the cradle of the race.

2. *Contrasts.* (1) The Biblical is distinguished by the absence of everything fanciful and absurd, with which the others teem. (2) The Biblical betrays nothing of a local or national character, whereas the others are indelibly stamped with them. (3) The Biblical is characterized by correct and worthy conceptions of the Creator, the rest either ignore Divine interposition, ascribe eternity to matter, introduce some demiurgic principle, or exhibit a supreme Being in a way degrading, confused, and indistinct. (4) The Biblical is simple, grand, and consistent, embodying all the truths in heathen cosmogonies, but free from their chaotic, grotesque, and self-contradictory representation.—*Ibid.*

VI. Analogy between the Works of God and the Works of Man.

[12529] Between the stupendous structure of the universe and the tiny edifices built by human hands—between the great home of humanity and the little home of the individual man, vast as is the difference in scale, there is yet a unity of principle and design, and we can interpret the one by the other. The cyclopean powers of nature and the puny hand of man, different as are the style and the materials of their masonry, yet work essentially according to the same plan. We can trace between them a correspondence of parts and an identity of design. It is, for example, no mere figure, but a simple fact, to say that the solid strata of the earth's rocky crust are its floor, the firm basis which sustains its manifold furniture, and all its forms of busy life—that the mountain ranges are its partition walls, the dividing barriers of nations, and boundary lines of diverse regions and climes —that the seas and rivers are its passages, busy lines of communication between country and country, the separate chambers, as it were, of the great family home—that the quarries and mines are its store vaults, wherein the Great Householder, provident of the wants of His whole family, hath piled up supplies adequate to the necessities of a world, and the consumption of thousands of years. Such analogies require only to be stated to strike every mind with all the force of truth ; and the more deeply we reflect on the subject, the more clearly and impressively does that grand unity reveal itself. The works of God and the works of man are seen to correspond to one another, as the sun to a drop of dew ; and the great globe itself, and all which it inherits, stands before the mind's eye as but the sublime and perfect archetype of each little dwelling of earth, or wood, or stone, which each man builds for himself, and in which he

plants his hearth and his home.—*J. Hamilton, D.D.*

VII. Evolution as related to the Creation.

1 Its definition.

[12530] Nature's great progression from the formless to the formed, from the inorganic to the organic, from blind force to conscious intellect and will.—*Prof. Huxley.*

2 Summary of its failures.

[12531] First, it fails to account for the origin of life, or to show that it is possible to produce living out of non-living matter. Until it can effect this it is useless for the purposes of atheism. Strange to say, unbelief is compelled to live by faith. It is confident that the discovery will be made hereafter.

Secondly, it fails to give any account of the origin of those qualities, which the original germs of life must have possessed, in order that a starting-point may be found for the course of evolution which it propounds.

Thirdly, it assumes the concurrence of a multitude of fortunate chances, so numerous as to approximate to the infinite, of what common sense refuses to believe to be possible, and which hopelessly conflict with the mathematical doctrine of chances and probabilities.

Fourthly, it demands an interval of time for the carrying out of this vast process of evolution, which although abstractedly possible, other branches of science refuse to concede to it as lying within the existing order of things.

Fifthly, it utterly fails to bridge over that profound gulf which separates the moral from the material universe, the universe of freedom from the universe of necessity. All that it can urge with respect to the origin of life and of free agency, is that it hopes to be able to propound a theory at some future time which shall be able to account for these phenomena.

Sixthly, the theory in question, including the Darwinian theory of the production of the entire mass of organisms that have existed in the past, and exist in the present, by the sole agency of natural selection, without the intervention of intelligence, is in fact a re-statement in a disguised form of the old theory of the production of all the adaptations and correlations in the universe, by the concurrence of an infinite number of fortunate chances—a theory which contradicts the primary intuitions of our intellectual being.

Seventhly, as a fact, the recorded observations by mankind for the last, say, four thousand years, show no instance of evolution of one species from another, but display variation, not infinite but limited, and recurrent to the original form.

Eighthly, as a fact, geology (Palæontology) shows the same absence of such evolution and of indefinite variation.

Ninthly, all the ascertained facts point only to creation by a plan, or in accordance with a rule, which permits variability within discoverable limits, and requires adaptation, and therefore furnishes no evidence of evolution of species.

Let me set before the reader in two sentences the result of the foregoing reasonings. The atheistic theory of evolution utterly breaks down as affording a rational account of the origin of adaptations and correlations with which every region of the universe abounds. Consequently the theistic account of their origin, which satisfies alike sound philosophy and common sense, is the only adequate one; or, in other words, they have originated in an intelligence which is possessed of a power adequate to their production.—*C. A. Row.*

VIII. The Plan of the World.

1 Its meaning.

[12532] By a plan of the world we mean that which God definitely *wills*, and thus consequently presents to Himself as the *final aim* of all His works, in contradistinction from that which He either does not will, or does not thus will. No Divine world of ideas, in the Platonic sense, herein stands before our mind; but a holy, Divine decree, for which that, which at God's behest became gradually realized, already existed beforehand in thought.—*Van Oosterzee.*

2 Its proofs.

(1) *The pre-existence of some plan proved from marks of order in the world.*

[12533] If there be an order and harmony, there must be an orderer, one that "made the earth by His power, established the world by His wisdom, and stretched out the heavens by His discretion" (Jer. x. 12). Order being the effect, cannot be the cause of itself. Order is the disposition of things to an end, and is not intelligent, but implies an intelligent orderer; and therefore it is as certain that there is a God as it is certain there is order in the world. Order is an effect of reason and counsel; this reason and counsel must have its residence in some being before this order was fixed. The things ordered are always distinct from that reason and counsel whereby they are ordered; and also after it, as the effect is after the cause. No man begins a piece of work but he hath the model of it in his own mind; no man builds a house or makes a watch but he hath the idea or copy of it in his own head. This beautiful world bespeaks an idea of it or a model, since there is such a magnificent wisdom in the make of each creature, and the proportion of one creature to another; this model must be before the world, as the pattern is always before the thing that is wrought by it. This therefore must be in some intelligent and wise agent, and this is God.—*Charnock.*

3 Its systematized method.

[12534] 1. Matter is brought into being. It

is rudimental. The Holy Ghost—whose special province is process, evolution, organization—broods over the elemental abyss. There are dividings and combinings, and, at length, there is a becoming of light, with (doubtless) its kindred agents, such as heat, electricity, magnetism. Processes go on, and the atmosphere is constituted. The new agents become additional forces in the great laboratory; and there results the mineral kingdom, with its gradations of rocks, clays, chemical compounds, and crystalline formations.

2. The mineral kingdom is a preparation for higher planes of being. From the organizing processes of the brooding Spirit the floral world has a becoming. All that have gone before have been made tributary to this. It takes them up and assimilates them, transforming them into living organisms of root, and trunk, and bough, and frond, and flower, and fruit, and seed.

3. The vegetable system is a prophecy of something higher. It has scant meaning if it is to find its end in itself. In due time the animal world appears. It gathers up into itself the elements of all below it, and exalts them into the more complex and nobler organisms of flesh and blood, bone and sinew, nerve and brain, sensation, instinct, affection, and will.

[12535] "Out of the depths of eternity, He looked onwards to the period when creation should commence." From everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was, when there were no depths, no fountains abounding with water, when as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest parts of the dust of the world, He anticipated the period when all these would be. Beyond this, He looked on to the remote period when the earth should be prepared for the reception and sustenance of animal life. He saw its forests wave; its waters roll; its surface clothed with verdure; and the whole replenished with various orders of sentient being. Ages beyond, and when, by successive creations and mighty intervals of change, the earth should have been slowly prepared for the reception of a being such as man, His eye fixed on the time when, in order to that event, He should prepare the heavens, and set a compass upon the face of the deep; when He should establish the clouds above; and when He should give to the sea His decree that the waters should not pass His commandment. Already in His prescient view the sun had received its final commission to shine, and earth had received its general outline of Alp, and Apennine, and Himalaya—of Atlantic, Pacific, and Mediterranean. Already Eden bloomed, and a river went out of it to water the garden. Man's mansion was prepared, but where was the great inhabitant? The theatre was ready—where was the being in whose introduction the mighty drama should begin? Already in intention He saw that creature come, radiant in His own image—the crown of creation: and, as He saw, He already heard "the morning stars sing together:" saw earth's first sabbath dawn; beheld man's earliest act of adoration; and pronounced the whole to be "good." Even then, though existing only in His Divine purpose, "He rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and His delights were with the sons of men;" His blessing enlarging Japheth and causing him to dwell in the tents of Shem. His purpose had formed the great continents of the earth, had smoothed the valleys where nations should be cradled, and given directions to the course of the rivers whose banks should become the seat of empire. The actual distribution of Canaan among the tribes of Israel was only the transcription of an eternal plan. "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask thy father and he will show thee, thy elders and they will tell thee, when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance; when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." Before Moses, before Pisgah itself, from which Moses looked down on the promised land, existed—His eye had looked down from the height of His sanctuary, and had beheld perspectively that Sinai whence His law should be given; that Zion which should be crowned with His temple; that Calvary which should sustain the mystery of the cross. —*J. Harris, D.D.*

4 Its inscrutable wisdom.

(1) *The scheme of the creation, be its character what it may, is constructed with a view to long processes and far-off results.*

[12536] Science might teach its disciples that processes which demand a long patience before their results are disclosed are likely to exercise it to the full; and that many curious, difficult, and perplexing phenomena are sure to present themselves, especially in the earlier stages of the evolution. A substance that has to undergo many modifications, and to pass through many transformations, is sure to puzzle and bewilder the patient observer at some point, probably at many points, of its development. But he watches and waits cheerfully, sure that, if he has followed the right method, it will justify his faith and patience by the result. And the Scripture tells us that it is thus, and must be thus, with the scheme of the creation. The Scripture tells us that God demands eternity to work out His plan in the creature; and that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain with the burden of an issue which eternity only can reveal.—*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*

5 Its grandeur and perfection.

[12537] The exaltedness of this plan already appears when we consider it in itself. It is wholly *unlimited*, and comprehends all that exists. Consciously or unconsciously, all must subserve and work together to one adorable end. It is, moreover, purely *moral*, such as is only to be expected of a holy God: the founding of one spiritual kingdom of truth and love, of holiness and blessedness. The solution of the highest life-questions for the individual man

and for humanity lies thus, not in the physical, not even in the purely intellectual, but in the religious and ethical domain. This Divine plan of the world is moreover *independent* and *eternal*. It was not first formed to counteract the effects of sin. Neither reason nor Scripture affords ground for the opinion that the free will of sinful man has set aside God's original design. On the contrary, God's plan with regard to the world dates from before the times of the ages; and even the abuse of freedom made by man was taken up by God as a link in the chain of its development. It has its ground, not in the creature, but in God's own sovereign, immutable good pleasure, and has as its centre Him in whom, as its spiritual Head, the whole of humanity is represented before God, the chosen One, in whom the good pleasure of the Father is fulfilled to an ever greater extent.—*Van Oosterzee* (*condensed*).

[12538] In an intelligent creature, we are accustomed to regard it as an indication of deficiency in wisdom to proceed without a plan or previous arrangement. And, if the system of operations be extensive, involving many interests, along with his own credit and his own happiness, such a pre-arrangement is considered by us all the more necessary. We extol the sagacity of the projector in proportion to the comprehensiveness and completeness of his plan; the amount of skill discovered in the mutual adjustment of all its parts, as well as of shrewd and penetrating foresight in anticipating and providing against difficulties, and probable or even possible hindrances and interruptions. It were surely to impute to Deity a wisdom less than human to suppose Him, in the creation and government of the universe, to act without a plan. And if He does act upon a plan, that plan must, in all its larger and minor details, be absolutely and unimprovably perfect.—*R. Wardlaw, D.D.*

6 Its connection with the doctrine of God.

[12539] The connection between the discussion of the idea of God and that of the Divine plan of the world is not difficult to discover. Thus far we have been learning to know God as the self-conscious and freely working Spirit, who possesses in Himself an infinite fulness of life, which, as He is the highest Love, He cannot cease to reveal and to communicate to others. That He actually has done and is doing this, is apparent from a glance at His works. But these works are simply the expression and realization of an eternal thought of God; and in order properly to comprehend them, the knowledge of the Divine plan of the world is necessary beforehand.—*Van Oosterzee* (*condensed*).

7 Its moral and redemptive aspects.

[12540] There is and there must ever have been a settled plan in the moral, as in the material world. But nothing can be more manifest than that the plan is not human. There has been no compact, no concert among men, and there is no such thing now, for carrying out this holy design. It is true that men have been the acting parties; so far as has been apparent to the eye, they have been the only acting parties. But the plan has been heaven's alone; the great laws of the moral world, also, which have reigned in all its movements have been from above, and the entire machinery, by which whatever success is yet witnessed has been gained, and by which perfect ultimate success shall be achieved, is Divine.—*J. Young, LL.D.*

[12541] Redemption was purposed from the first as the means of manifesting, not to the fallen creature only, but to the whole universe, the fulness of the Divine nature, the perfect wisdom, the perfect righteousness, and the perfect love of God.

Redemption was not devised as the means by which the wreck which sin had wrought might just be repaired, and the purpose and hope which the Fall had frustrated might just be realized. It is distinctly set forth in Scripture as the means by which results might be secured for the universe through eternity, which without such a "work of God" would have been for ever impossible; by which the Divine nature would be able to reveal itself with a fulness, and man's nature would be lifted to a height, which would make the new creation, through which the keynote of redemption should reign, the theatre of the unfolding of a transcendently beautiful, blessed, and glorious life, the life of beings trained by trial, perfected by suffering, and prepared by a rich, full, and deep experience of all the possibilities of freedom, to enter into the fellowship of the Divine life through eternity. The true statement of the matter is that, had redemption remained a dream of possibility instead of a power—the power of God to rule and to bless the creation, and to fulfil its highest hope—God would have remained a name, a shadowy shape without form or voice, to the very noblest and loftiest of His creatures; and the race most capable of knowing, loving, and serving Him would have been left to mourn over the impotence or the indifference of the supreme.—*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*

8 Its end in view.

[12542] The plan of the world has in view nothing less than the founding of a kingdom of God, immeasurable in extent, under one Head, the God-man; through whom all the members stand in the closest relation to each other and to Him. The gradual realization of this thought, fraught with all blessing, to the glorifying of His name, is the final aim of all God's works.—*Van Oosterzee* (*condensed*).

IX. The Biblical Record of Creation.

1 The sources of the narrative

[12543] We cannot suppose that man was placed on the earth in ignorance of his own

origin, or of the origin of the creatures by which he is surrounded, and of which he is at once the crown and glory. Doubtless Adam was well instructed in the history of creation; and it is most unlikely that he should have withheld this knowledge from his family, or that they should have failed to transmit it in some way or other to their posterity. We know that Abraham was the instructor as well as the governor of his household, and that the fathers possessed supernatural revelation, so that there is nothing incredible in the idea of Moses obtaining the materials of his history from authentic tradition or ancient records. In a somewhat recent anonymous work on the anthropology of the Bible, entitled "Primeval Man Unveiled" (p. 22), an ingenious and by no means eccentric argument in favour of this view is built on the reference in the gospel-song of Zacharias to the Old Testament predictions of the Messiah "spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began." "Since the world began!" The reference is most suggestive. Who were those prophets? Was not Enoch one of them? And is it unreasonable to suppose that Adam and Seth and Noah and Shem and others were also of the number? And if so, can we believe that they left behind them no authentic memoirs, in the form of family and other chronicles, or at least oral narratives, to be handed down from father to son, so that they might "shew to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength, and His wonderful works that He hath done; that the children which should be born should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God?"—*E. A. Thompson, D.D.*

2 Its purposes.

[12544] The purpose of the record is double, theological and moral: theological, as referring to God the primal acts and the successive acts also, and as setting forth the relations of the universe and of man to God. Moral in this, that it is intended to set forth the goodness of that which was done, and to shut out from the conception of the reader that the evil which we see in the world, and which we feel therein, had any part in its original constitution, or in its original nature. It excludes all evil also from the progressive developments of life and being. The purpose is not scientific. It deals with causes, and it deals with the moral qualities of results.—*Canon Ashwell.*

3 Its wide acceptance.

[12545] The doctrine that God created plants and animals in the beginning, "after their kind," has prevailed for three thousand years, from Moses until now, among the best, noblest, and wisest of men. It has been no crude fancy of ignorant peasants alone. Among its firm believers are all the prophets and all the apostles, most of the Greek philosophers, and Christian divines and men of science for fifteen centuries, the intellectual lights and standard-bearers of the leading nations of the earth. It includes among its disciples and adherents nearly all the great names, like Bacon, Kepler, Boyle, and Newton, by whom the chief advances of modern science have been made. Its true birthplace is in no flint-weapon manufactory, or bone-cavern—in an "era of profoundest darkness." It is in thick darkness of a very opposite kind, when Moses, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians—the foremost, wisest, and noblest of all living men, drew near to the presence of Jehovah, talked with Him face to face in the holy mount as a man speaketh with his friend, and received from Him those messages which have enlightened and cheered the minds and hearts of sinful men through every later age of the world's history.—*T. R. Birks, M.A.*

4 Its characteristics.

(1) *It is definitely concise.*

[12546] That the glorious universe we see around us is the work of an Almighty Creator, the true and living God, is taught in the first sentence of the Bible, and affirmed throughout all the later books of Scripture. It holds the foremost place in the two main creeds of the Christian Church, and there is taught in the words, "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible." The Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets abound in testimonies to this great truth. It is declared strongly and plainly in the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament, and is proclaimed anew in the song of the heavenly elders, and in the oath of the mighty Angel, in that great prophecy which crowns and completes the written messages of God.

This truth is not set before us in the Bible with nice definitions or metaphysical subtleties, which might only obscure its simple grandeur. But it plainly includes two main ideas, that there is a self-existent Being, the supreme and all-wise Creator; and that all other beings are creatures which receive their being as the gift of His bounty, and depend from the first on His good pleasure alone.—*Ibid.*

(2) *It is specifically relative.*

[12547] It relates specifically to the race of man. Besides being prepared *for* man, it concerns itself chiefly, if not exclusively, with what belongs *to* him. Of the creation of angels nothing is said. Respecting the starry heavens a brief clause is employed; for what are they all to man, in his present state, compared with the sun which makes his day, the moon which rules his night, and the earth on which he dwells. In the account of the vegetable creation, no mention is made of timber-trees, the giants of the botanical kingdom; the history is confined to the production of grasses, or food for cattle; to herbs, or grain and leguminous plants for his own use, and to fruit-bearing trees; all relating, directly or indirectly, to the wants and conve-

niences of mankind. Man himself is described as created last; plainly intimating that all which had gone before was only a means of which he was to be the subordinate end. And not only the process, but even its termination is made to subserve his welfare, for it is laid as a reason for the institution of the sabbath. If the creation itself, then, be thus designed to subserve his welfare, it is only in harmony with this fact that the account of the creation should be given in a style so familiar as to be easily understood by him; in a manner so graphic as to make him present, and to paint it to his eye; and that it should confine itself chiefly to that which more immediately concerns him.—*J. Harris, D.D.*

(3) *It is expressively harmonious.*

[12548] It is important rightly to estimate the *character* of the Mosaic account of the creation. Having no reason whatever to regard it as a poem, a myth, a philosophic speculation, a translated hieroglyph, or in any other light than that which it assumes to be—a history of facts, of Divine origin, conveyed through the limitation of a human medium, and for human use—we find, on reading it, that it exhibits precisely those characteristics which analogy would have led us to expect.

It is strictly *anthropopathic*, or in harmony with the feelings, views, and popular modes of expression which prevail in an early state of society, and which are always best adapted for universal use. Hence the colloquial or dramatic style of the account. For example: *And God said*—not that there was any *vocal* utterance, where, as yet, there was no *ear* to hear (each of which would imply a corporeal structure)—*let there be light—let there be a firmament—let the earth bring forth*—by which we are to understand that these effects were produced just as if such a fiat had been, in each instance, vocally uttered, and such a formula actually employed. The bare volitions of the Infinite Mind are deeds. So, again, when it is said that God "rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made;" the truth involved obviously is, not that of reposing from fatigue, for Inspiration itself affirms that "the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary," but that of ceasing or desisting from a process which has reached completion. The pause at the close of the sixth day, and the continuation of it on the opening of the seventh, *resembled* the quiet of a person relaxing and at rest after a laborious and exhausting process. —*Ibid.*

(4) *It is simply natural.*

[12549] Let us suppose that to some very early prophet, like Enoch, the seventh from Adam, the injunction was given to proclaim to mankind the doctrine that God is the absolute Creator of the material universe and all its forces, and that from His will all the tribes of animate beings, including man, sprang to life; let us farther suppose that, in fitting and illuminating the prophet for his task, the whole course of nature from the beginning to the end was unveiled, and all the discoveries and inventions of man, and the speculations of philosophy, down to the present day were shown to him. Now if this hypothesis explains all the facts in the case, and if there is no fact to be found inconsistent with it, then it is fair to infer that so much of the hypothesis as may be found necessary to explain the facts is true; and this inference will be greatly strengthened if the hypothesis extends farther, and explains facts not at first taken into view; also if the imagination in vain seeks any other explanation.

In the first place the prophet would naturally seek to say that God is the Creator of matter and its forces. But in what terms can he do this? No speculations have as yet discussed the origin of matter; there is no word signifying to create; the arts have not sufficiently advanced to make a distinction between material and product, and there is no word for matter; neither have the sciences reached the state in which the forces of nature were named. Of course, in addressing men the language of men must be used, and the prophet having no words by which to express his ideas, and being forbidden by the necessity of making himself intelligible from coining words, must use periphrases. He endeavours to declare that God was the Creator of matter by saying that God shaped the heavens and the earth, and the earth was waste and empty, and darkness lay over its abysses, and the breath of God brooded over its waters. This representation of the forming of a formless earth is the nearest approach to a declaration of the creation of matter that the language of that early day could make. Then, in order to declare God to be the author of all the forces of nature, and that He holds them under His control, what resource is there but for the prophet to select the most striking of those forces, and to say, God made that, and thus imply that he made all the rest that would be hereafter discovered. He chooses light, the most striking and wondrous of all to the untutored eye, most wonderful in itself, in its revelations and its suggestions, and declares, God said light be, and light was. The emphasis throughout the whole chapter is upon the Divine name; the proposition to be conveyed being not so much that God said, as that it was God who said—a distinction which the rude language could not make. All things sprang from His foreknowledge and His will—this is the prophet's meaning; it is only the poverty of the uncultivated language of the time which forces him to express himself in this way. God saw that the light was good; that is, He predestined it for its multiform uses in the economy of vegetative and animal life, and in the development of the human intellect. And it was He who separated the light from the darkness; He retained the control of the force which He had created, and appointed of His foreknowledge the alternations of day and night. In like manner with all the forces of nature afterward to be discovered in scientific research

—heat, electricity, galvanic currents, chemical affinities, actinic rays, whatever they were—they came at God's command, they were foreseen by Him as good, and designed for their uses, and they are retained in His power of guidance. How could the prophet say this to the rude people of his early time better than in those sublime words selected from their unpolished language, to shine, nevertheless, as undimmed brilliants throughout all ages: "God said, Let there be light: and there was light."—*President Hill.*

(5) *It is reasonably supernatural.*

a. The scriptural view of creation is part of a sacred supernatural system.

[12550] The supernaturalism of the Scripture system is coherent and complete; the record is supernatural, and so, throughout, are the things recorded. God is above and distinct from the universe. His personal free agency is the first cause throughout its history as well as in its origination. His sovereign primary causation extends alike through physical nature and the moral or spiritual world, alike through the old creation and the new. Thus God "is all, and in all," and "worketh all in all." The system is one of all-pervading supernaturalism. At the same time, the supernaturalism is reasonable, not unnatural or monstrous. It is in the line of nature, in keeping with nature, and for purposes which nature shows to be good and worthy of God. God is not lost in the universe, nor is the universe in God. As truly as though there had been no God, man remains man, physical nature remains physical nature; they retaining their respective subsistences and modes of operation, while God is all and works all. And its place in a system thus completely and reasonably supernaturalistic, is for the Scripture view of creation one element of credibility or ground of belief.—*J. Iverach, M.A.*

5 Its testimonies to the truth.

[12551] Gen. i. 1 excludes five speculative falsehoods: that nothing can be known of God or the origin of things; that there is nothing but uncreated matter; that there is no God distinct from His creatures; that creation is a series of acts without a beginning; and that there is no real universe; or more briefly, nihilism, materialism, pantheism, evolutionism, and negative idealism.—*T. R. Birks, M.A.*

6 The dates and eras of the Mosaic account.

[12552] The Mosaic account recognizes in creation two great eras of three days each—an inorganic and an organic. Each of these opens with the appearance of light: the first, light cosmical; the second, light from the sun for the special uses of the earth. Each era ends in a day of two great works; the two shown to be distinct by being severally pronounced "good." On the third "day"—that closing the inorganic era—there was, first, the dividing of the land from the waters, and afterwards the creation of vegetation, or the institution of a kingdom of life—a work widely diverse from all preceding it in the era. So, on the sixth day, terminating the organic era, there was, first, the creation of mammals, and then a second far greater work, totally new in its grandest element—the creation of man. We have, then, the following arrangement:

I. THE INORGANIC ERA.

1st Day.—Light, cosmical.
2nd Day.—The earth divided from the fluid around it, or individualized.
3rd Day.—{1. Outlining of the land and water. 2. Creation of vegetation.

II. THE ORGANIC ERA.

4th Day.—Light, from the sun.
5th Day.—Creation of the lower orders of animals.
6th Day.—{1. Creation of mammals. 2. Creation of man.

In addition, the last day of each era included one work typical of the era, and another related to it in essential points, but also prophetic. Vegetation, while for physical reasons a part of the creation of the third day, was also prophetic of the future organic era, in which the progress of life was the grand characteristic. The record of Moses thus accords with the fundamental principle in history, that the characteristic of an age has its beginnings within the age preceding. So, again, man, while like other mammals in structure, even to the homologies of every bone and muscle, was endowed with a spiritual nature, which looked forward to another era—that of spiritual existence. The "seventh" "day"—the day of rest from the work of creation—is man's period of preparation for that new existence; and it is to promote this special end that, in strict parallelism, the Sabbath follows man's six days of work.—*J. F. Hurst, D.D.*

[12553] The Hebrew word for "beginning," רֵאשִׁית (*reshith'*), is in the original without the definite article; so that Moses really says, "In *reshith* (not in *the* reshith) Elohim created the heavens and the earth." The Septuagint, Chaldee, and Syriac versions corroborate the antiquity and correctness of this reading. Thus there is an indefiniteness of the time of creation. It may have been millions of years ago just as easily as thousands, for the Hebrew word is indefinite, and the verse reads in substance thus: "Of old, in former duration, God created the heavens and the earth."—*Ibid.*

[12554] Arguing from analogy, many contend that the term "day" does not mean literally twenty-four hours. That word often signifies in the Bible undefined periods of time, as the "day of the Lord," "the day of vengeance," "that day," "the night is far spent, the day is at hand." The first day consisted of an alternation of light and darkness; but how long the night lasted, and how long the darkness

until the next dawn, is not stated. The whole time of light in which God's creative work proceeded He called "day," and the whole time of darkness He called "night." It was not a day measured by the presence of the sun's light, nor a night measured by the absence of that light. The name "day" is therefore regarded as given, not as a measure of extent—which is a later and a subordinate idea—but as denoting a wondrous phenomenon, marking the first great transition, and calling up the dual contrast which has entered into the corresponding name ever since, "God called the light day, and the darkness He called night." He called it *Yom*, and from that has come the lesser naming. We now indicate the gradual developing character of the creation. It was not the work of six ordinary days, measured by twenty-four hours, but a series of supernatural growths extending over vast periods of time.—*Ibid.*

[12555] Whatever differences may be entertained respecting the particular period referred to by the prophet (Zech. xiv. 6, 7), there can be no question that the *one day* is the proper designation of a peculiar day, "*dies unicus prorsus singularis*" (Maurer); "*ein einziges Tag*" (De Wette); or "*einzig in seiner Art*," the only one of its kind (Hitzig); and that the form of expression is strictly parallel with Gen. i. 5. The coincidence is certainly very striking, and naturally suggests the question, if prophecy, which predicts the far-distant future, has, as thus evinced, its unique day, why may not also creation, which has to do with a remote past, whose days were completed long ere history began?—*D. Macdonald, M.A.*

X. The System of Nature in the Universe specially considered.

1 Its definitions and revelations.

[12556] Nature is a term used both in an active and in a passive sense. In its passive sense it stands for the causally connected sequences which appear in time and space. In the active sense it represents the forces which in their adjustments and conditions produce the phenomena of matter and finite mind. In using the word in its most general passive sense, care is necessary to avoid confounding it with universe; for then there would seem to be no room left for the term "supernatural."—*G. F. Wright.*

[12557] What we call nature is the whole circuit of things which has been evolved by the invisible powers and virtues of God. He is "clearly seen," therefore, as Paul affirms, "in the things which He has made." Not seen as an artist is seen in his picture, nor as an architect is seen in his architecture, but seen as a man is seen in the body in which he lives, and which has been evolved from his spirit. For God is immanent in His universe. He wears it "as a garment;" so that both as a whole, and in all its parts, it is alive with His life. "It lives, moves, and has its being in Him."

In the old reverential Scriptures of the prophets, the word Nature never occurs. They simply speak of heaven and earth as being full of God, full of His glory. "The whole earth is full of His glory" (Isa. vi. 3). "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord" (Jer. xxiii. 24). His Name is, He that "filleth all in all;" and the All lives and moves in the power of His breath. Heaven and earth are His Spirit made manifest, "clearly seen." They are His bush, in which He dwells, and which is full of the fire of His life. But note what manner of fire *His fire* is! How meek! how sweet! It consumes not, but causes the whole bush to live and glow, bloom and sing. What we call nature is Peniel, "the face of God," in large outline. "I have seen God face to face." Nature is the incarnation, which Jesus sums up and heads in His Person. It is His fulness laid open in stupendous form—in granite cathedral elevations, reared up through and beyond the clouds, and standing in their calm majesty, unveiled in the eternal ether. On their heads they wear a crystalline crown, glistening in the sun; on their shoulders flowing robes of verdure; in their laps are vineyards and gardens, and at their feet tender grass for the cattle, and running streams. Yes, in the reverences and grandeurs of the Alps, in the flowering beauty of their slopes, in the wealth of corn in their valleys, in the life-like flow and frolic of their streams, "I have seen God face to face," as in a mirror—"clearly seen" His invisible essence in His visible creation. I have seen heaven and earth married, making one exquisite harmony, glowing, dancing, rejoicing in their unity.—*J. Pulsford.*

[12558] The actual revelation recorded in the Bible employed nature as its organ. In the revelation of new truth, God is constantly found availing Himself of the old creation. Dreams and visions, and voices to the ear, the thundercloud on Sinai, the cleft sea, dearth and the plague, the vicissitudes of war, conquest, and revolt, were all turned into vehicles for teaching saving lessons to mankind. The whole of Bible teaching, too, attaches itself to the parables of nature. Domestic and social life, the farm, the fishery, the garden, are inspired with deeper thoughts than they naturally utter. God makes nature vocal with redemption. Above all, His final revelation of Himself is in the life of a man, a true natural life resting on the physical basis of a true body, "born of a woman;" so that the highest of all revelations is in appearance the most human, the least supernatural. Now, how could all this be? how could the new revelation utilize the old creation, and make earth, and sun, and sky, above all, man himself, its ministers to preach salvation, unless, first of all, creation were itself full of God, and yet were, after all, God's servant, to work withal?—*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

2 Antiquity of its idea.

[12559] The idea of the unity of nature must be at least as old as the idea of one God; and even those who believe in the derivation of man from the savage and the brute cannot tell us how soon the monotheistic doctrine arose. The Jewish literature and traditions, which are at least among the oldest in the world, exhibit this doctrine in the purest form, and represent it as the doctrine of primeval times. The earliest indications of religious thought among the Aryan races point in the same direction. The records of that mysterious civilization which had been established on the Nile at a date long anterior to the call of Abraham are more and more clearly yielding results in harmony with the tradition of the Jews. The polytheism of Egypt is being traced and tracked through the ready paths which lead to the fashioning of many gods out of the attributes of one.—*Duke of Argyll.*

3 Origin of its worship.

[12560] The great fact of the whole ancient world was this, that its multiform religions started from a nature basis. The sun and stars, the reproductive forces of animal and vegetable life, the decay and revival of the year, the wondrous cycle, in short, of cosmic change through which Nature accomplishes herself, was the common fact which very early riveted the attention of primitive man, till out of it there grew up in many lands, under many shapes, a system of religious observance everywhere the same in principle. Plainly this system of religion started from the Bible truth that nature is a revelation of God. By degrees, no doubt, the Divine idea became obscured. The sense of nature's unity grew feeble. Men came to see not so much one God speaking through all His creatures, as rather a separate morsel of Divinity inherent in each separate creature. From using the sun, or the dawn, or the sky, or the spring, as a symbol only for that Invisible Being whose thoughts these objects revealed, men began to adore the symbol, and to forget the Invisible Person behind it. Easy and rapid was the downward plane to idolatry and polytheism and gross fetish-worship. Yet what is worth noting is, that such nature-religions would have been impossible had not Nature really spoken to unsophisticated men a Divine message, had it not been charged to their souls from the first with Divine ideas.—*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

4 Unity of its laws.

[12561] One sign of unity is given to us in the ties by which this world of ours is bound to the other worlds around it. There is no room for fancy here. The truths which have been reached in this matter have been reached by the paths of rigorous demonstration. This earth is part of the vast mechanism of the heavens. The force or forces by which that mechanism is governed are forces which prevail not only in our own solar system, but, as there is reason to believe, through all space, and are determining, as astronomers tell us, the movement of our sun, with all its planets, round some distant centre, of which we know neither the nature nor the place. Moreover, these same forces are equally prevailing on the surface of this earth itself. The whole of its physical phenomena are subject to the conditions which they impose. The structure of our own bodies, with all that depends upon it, is a structure governed by, and therefore adapted to, the same force of gravitation which has determined the form and the movements of myriads of worlds. Every part of the human organism is fitted to conditions which would all be destroyed in a moment if the forces of gravitation were to change or fail. Nor is gravitation the only agency which brings home to us the unity of the conditions which prevail among the worlds. There is another—Light—that sweet and heavenly messenger which comes to us from the depths of space, telling us all we know of other worlds, and giving us all that we enjoy of life and beauty in our own.—*Duke of Argyll.*

5 Its scientific analysis and classification.

[12562]

Fundamental Ideas.	*Sciences.*	*Classification.*
Substance	Metaphysics	Essential Being.
Space and Time	Mathematics	Quantity or conditions of dependent being.
Cause, or Power	Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry	Unorganized Bodies.
Design, or Wisdom	Phytonomy, Botany	Organized Bodies.
Goodness	Zoology	Sentient Being.
Rightness	Applied sciences, Ethics, Theology	Rational Being.

—*J. Harris, D.D.*

6 Its inter-relations.

[12563] Everything is related to everything. But it we take any one event as central, and look back in the direction from which it came, we soon arrive at a point which compels us to stop, but where something invisible and unknown must be presupposed, in order to account for its existence; if, then, we look forwards in the direction in which it is travelling, we see that there is no end to its effects, though it soon passes into a domain where we have no power to follow it; while, in both directions, we see it, in its progress, touching innumerable other things on the right hand and on the left, or touched by them, all of which are similarly charged with influences interminable.—*Ibid.*

7 The existence of matter.

(1) *Its nature, conditions, and properties.*

[12564] Three alternative views have been held concerning the nature of matter, that it is continuous, solid, extended, and infinitely di-

visible; that it consists of solid, discrete, but extended atoms, endued with various forces, and with a large amount of porous interstice or interval between them; and that it consists of centres of attractive and repulsive forces alone. The first is the popular view before close attention to the facts of science, the second is that of Newton, the third of Boscovich.—*T. R. Birks, M.A.*

[12565] The necessary constituents of our notion of matter the primary qualities of bodies, are thus all evolved from the two Catholic conditions of matter—(1) the occupying space, and (2) the being contained in space. Of these, the former affords (*a*) trinal extension, explicated again into (1) divisibility; (2) size, containing under it density or rarity; (3) figure; and (*b*) ultimate incompressibility; while the latter gives (*a*) mobility and (*b*) situation. The primary qualities of matter thus develop themselves out of the original datum of substance occupying space.—*Sir W. Hamilton.*

[12566] None of the processes of nature, since the time when nature began, have produced the slightest difference in the properties of any molecule. We are, therefore, unable to ascribe either the existence of the molecules or the identity of their properties to the operation of any of the causes which we call natural. The quality of each molecule gives it the essential character of a manufactured article, and precludes the idea of its being eternal and self-existent.—*Prof. Clerk Maxwell.*

[12567] As we look on matter, we recognize in it certain essential properties, so essential that we cannot conceive of its existence without them. They are extension, form, density, impenetrability, rarity, malleability, ductility, elasticity, porosity, and inertia. If we place ourselves back of the first constitution of things, we cannot conceive of matter as existing without them.—*Clark Braden.*

[12568] If inertia is a property of matter, the power to evolve organization, life, and thought, cannot be; but that inertia is a property of matter is a proposition susceptible of overwhelming proof from the necessary beliefs of the mind, from common consent, from the agreement of philosophers in all ages, and from all the results of experiment and observation. By inertia, I mean the incapacity to originate force or motion, or that quality which causes matter, if set in motion without other resistance than itself can supply, to keep on moving for ever; or, if left at rest without other force than its own, to remain at rest for ever.—*Joseph Cook.*

(2) *Its relation to, and dependence on mind.*

[12569] Two men are in a room: one is handcuffed and fettered; or, to make the comparison more complete, let us say paralyzed. Now suppose some beautiful work of art is brought into existence in that room. It would be very certain that the work of art was made by the man who was not paralyzed. The universe is such a room. There are only two things in it—matter and mind. But matter is handcuffed. The works of art which the universe contains must be the present product of mind.—*Ibid.*

[12570] Matter has extension, impenetrability, figure, divisibility, inertia, colour. Mind has neither. Not one of these terms has any conceivable meaning in application to thought or emotion. What is the shape of love? How many inches long is fear? What is the colour of memory? Since Aristotle and St. Augustine, the antithesis between mind and matter has been held to be so broad, that Sir William Hamilton's common measure for it was the phrase, "the whole diameter of being."—*Ibid.*

[12571] 1. If matter is essentially inert—that is, if it cannot originate force or motion—every exhibition of force or motion in matter must originate in mind.

2. But matter is essentially inert, that is, it cannot originate force or motion.

3. Therefore, every exhibition of force or motion in matter originates in mind.

The reasoning underlying the first premise may be analytically stated as follows:—

1. Only matter and mind exist in the universe.

2. Matter is inert, that is, it cannot originate force or motion.

3. If, therefore, matter moves or exhibits force, that force must originate in mind.

4. That mind is God.

5. Matter does move and exhibit force now and here.

6. God, therefore, is now and here, since where He acts, there He is.—*Ibid.*

[12572] There are but three methods by which matter may be invested with the property of thought. 1. It may be inherent in every form of matter. And then the stones, the flowers, your toes, your fingers, are all thinking as well as your brain! No sane man believes this. 2. Thought may be the result of a peculiar organization; as when particles of matter are combined in the shape and proportions of the human body, thought may manifest itself. Now, if there is no innate tendency to thought in the isolated particles of matter (and there cannot be, unless the previous supposition be true), then, of course, these particles cannot, under any circumstances or combinations, contribute anything to thought as the result. It is not in them separately, and it cannot, therefore, be in them collectively. They cannot impart what they do not themselves contain. Now, if it is affirmed that, when these thoughtless atoms are cast into the human form, intelligence is the product of this material configuration, then you have an effect for which you have no cause. You have thought, for the creation of which the particles have no power. You have in the whole more than the parts thereof possess; in

the product, more than the factor can produce! Is it in any sense possible that five pounds, say, of sand, can be cast into any shape whatever so that, as a result, the same sand shall weigh ten pounds? This is the feat of materialism! 3. Or the power of thought may be superadded to the ordinary properties of matter; in which case the power of thought must inhere to every part of the organization, so that each particle shall contribute its share to the final sum of intelligence. But here the theory is pressed with the problem of the divisibility of matter. Since the atoms of the body are extended and divisible, the soul, mind, or thought, adhering to these particles, must be extended and divisible also. This is inevitable. And then, in the language of Dr. Thomas Brown, "it will not be more absurd to talk of the twentieth part of an affirmation, or the quarter of a hope, of the top of a remembrance, and the north and east corners of a comparison, than of the twentieth part of a pound, or of the different points of the compass in reference to any part of the globe."—*T. McRae.*

8 The power of natural forces.

(1) *Their manifestations.*

[12573] Starting with the abstract notion of force, as emanating at once from the Divine will, we might say that this force, operating through inorganic matter, manifests itself in electricity, magnetism, light, heat, chemical affinity, and mechanical motion; but that, when directed through organized structures, it affects the operations of growth, development, chemico-vital transformation, and the like; and is further metamorphosed, through the instrumentality of the structures thus generated, into nervous agency and muscular power.—*W. B. Carpenter, M.D.*

(2) *Their limits.*

[12574] Too frequently the assertions concerning certain so-called facts of science, after being carefully considered and examined, become resolved into the vaguest conjectures. Such indeed are many of the statements which have been made about the formative and constructive capacity of force. Energy does not construct or form, although it has been affirmed over and over again that it does form living things, that force constructs the worm and forms the bee, and that suns, the fountains of force, resolve themselves into the living beings that people this earth! But where is the evidence in favour of the constructive power of force? Is it not strange that any one should maintain that force should be competent to construct the marvellous mechanism of a living plant or animal, when he must needs confess that all force is impotent to make a wheel or build a mill? But force is actually opposed to construction, and before anything can be built up, the tendencies of force must be overcome by formative agency or power. Unless force is first conquered and then regulated and directed, structure will not be evolved. Force may destroy and dissipate, but it cannot build; it may disintegrate, but it cannot fashion; it may crush, but it is powerless to create. It is doubtful if it would be possible to adduce a dogma more unfounded than the dogma that the sun forms or builds—constructs or resolves itself into anything that possesses structure, and is capable of performing definite work of any kind for any purpose.—*Lionel S. Beale, M.D.*

(3) *John Stuart Mill's pessimistic indictment as to natural forces met and refuted.*

[12575] "Next to the vastness of the natural forces, what strikes us," he says, "is their perfect and absolute recklessness. They go straight to their end without regarding what or whom they crush in their round. In sober truth, nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are nature's every-day performances. She kills once every being that lives. She abridges their due term, and she does so in manners violent and insidious. Nature impales men—breaks them as on the wheel—casts them to be devoured by wild beasts—burns them to death—crushes them with stones like the first Christian martyrs—starves them with hunger—freezes them with cold—poisons them by the quick or slow venom of her exhalations, and has hundreds of other hideous deaths in reserve, such as the ingenious cruelty of a Nabis or a Domitian never surpassed. And all this nature does with the most supercilious regard, both of mercy and of justice, emptying her shafts upon the best and noblest indifferently with the meanest and worst. And besides taking life, she takes the means whereby we live. A single hailstorm destroys the hope of a season. A flight of locusts, or an inundation, desolates a district. A trifling chemical change in an edible root starves a million of people. The waves of the sea, like bandits, seize and appropriate the wealth of the rich and the little all of the poor. Nature has her poignards more fatal than those of the assassin. Her explosions of fire-damp are as destructive as human artillery. Her plagues and her choleras far surpass the poison cups of the Borgias. The Reign of Terror is overmatched in injustice, ruin, and death by a hurricane or by a pestilence." There is the tremendous indictment: dare a Christian look it in the face? Most certainly he dare—that and any other view which may be offered to him of God's universe; and what he says of this indictment as a whole is, that while it does contain an element of truth, and points to a mystery which he has never professed entirely to solve, yet, first of all, it is enormously exaggerated. The rare and exceptional effects which, after all, are very few, are presented as though they were the frequent and the normal. And, in the next place, a very opposite picture, indeed, might be drawn of nature with, at least, equal truth. Happiness not only predominates, but immensely predominates, in her domain. Though her creatures do prey upon each other; though the

May-fly is chased by the swallow, the swallow speared by the shrike, and the whole little wood wherein we live is a world of plunder and of prey, yet they are utterly undisturbed—these living things—by the certainty of death; and no one can look at the creatures in their elements—the cattle grazing peacefully in the meadow, the wild beasts bounding through the forests, the fish gliding in the waters, the birds sporting amid the sunny trees, the insects quivering in the summer noon—without seeing that they are happy, and saying, "They are very good." And though man, mainly through his own faults and follies, is not altogether happy, yet on every hand he is surrounded by beneficence. Over his head all day long is the pomp and prodigality of heaven. And then, thirdly, how large a part of this impeachment turns on the four facts of pain, accident, disease, and death! But in spite of all these, may we not say that there must be an overbalance of happiness still? Men not only cling, but passionately cling, to life; and may we not say of them separately that pain, however hard to understand, is made to subserve very blessed purposes—that it is a salutary premonition of danger, a blessed stimulus to tenderness, a faithful warning against sin? And may we not say of accident that we can often trace how it is all God's unseen Providence, by men nicknamed chance? And of disease, may we not say that nine-tenths of it is not the fault of nature, seeing that it is distinctly due to preventible conditions, perfectly avoidable by moral and sanitary care? Where there are good drainage and decent houses, typhoid and cholera would disappear. Were men temperate, were men pure, there would soon be no gout, no delirium tremens, very little madness, nor would the blood of myriads be poisoned, from childhood upwards, by a deadly taint. Is nature, then, to be charged with cruelty if men neglect her warnings and violate her laws? or is she as little to blame—if I may borrow an illustration—as the ocean and the sea breeze are to blame, though the ocean floats the pirate, and though the sea breeze swells his sails? Is death, then, so great an evil? Is it so difficult to die? Is it not a thing perfectly natural, and even beautiful? Do not the old in age pass away as the ripe fruit falls? Do not "whom the gods love die young?" Does not God know when our day's work is over? and whether that be early or late, does He not then give His beloved sleep? Is not death, in our belief, but the beginning of a new life? Would it not almost make us die for sorrow to be told that we should not die? So far from regarding death as an unmitigated curse for which we may accuse nature, may we not hold that whether it comes by the sudden plunge of a precipice, or the lingering declivities of a disease—by the sinking of a ship, or the explosion of a colliery, it is the great birthright of mankind to die?—so that putting death apart as no evil at all, or, if an evil, one which we may approach with a smile, because it has been robbed of its victory and of its sting; and putting also aside all that incredibly vast proportion of accident, and disease, and pain, which is due to the folly and the ignorance of man—the result of his carelessness, or the retribution of his sins—how much then is left which is not entirely consonant with the power and the mercy of an infinitely merciful and an infinitely holy God?—*Archdeacon Farrar.*

9 Characteristics of nature.

(1) *Mysteriousness and wonderfulness.*

[12576] In all departments of philosophy, human curiosity is stopped, at an earlier or at a later stage, by an impassable barrier—it meets what is inscrutable. The constitution of the elements in the material world is inscrutable; the gravitating force, and the principle of chemical affinity—the nature of light, and the principle of vegetable life—these things are utterly inscrutable: so also is the principle of animal life; and so, in like manner, but not more so, is mind. At all these points alike, and as to each of them for the same reasons, we reach a limit which the human mind has never yet passed.—*Isaac Taylor.*

[12577] If the baffled inquirer then drops out the search after God, as many do, and says—I will go down to nature, and it shall, at least, be my comfort that nature is intelligible, and even a subject of definite science, he shortly discovers that science only changes the place of mystery and leaves it unresolved. Hearing, with a kind of scientific pity, Job's question about the thunder—who can understand "the noise of His tabernacle?" he at first thinks it something of consequence to say that thunder is the noise of electricity, and not of God's tabernacle at all. But he shortly finds himself asking, who can understand electricity? and then, at last, he is with Job again. So, when he hears Job ask, "Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven?"—he recollects the great Newtonian discovery of gravity, and how, by aid of that principle, even the weights of the stars have been exactly measured, and their times predicted, and imagines that, now the secrets of astronomy are out, the ordinances of heaven are understood. But here, again, it finally occurs to him to ask, what is gravity? and forthwith he is lost in a depth of mystery as profound as that of Job himself. And so, asking what is matter?—what is life, animal and vegetable?—what is heat, light, attraction, affinity?—he discovers that, as yet, we really comprehend nothing, and that nature is a realm as truly mysterious even as God. Not a living thing grows out of the earth, or walks upon it, or flies above it; not an inanimate object exists, in heaven, earth, or sea, which is not filled and circled about with mystery as truly as in the days of Adam or Job, and which is not really as much above the understanding of science as the deepest things of God's eternity or of His secret life.—*H. Bushnell, D.D.*

[12578] All this visible universe is only an imperceptible point in the vast bosom of nature. The mind of man cannot grasp it. It is in vain that we try to stretch our conceptions beyond all imaginable space; we bring before the mind's eye merely atoms in comparison with the reality of things. It is an infinite sphere, of which the centre is everywhere, the circumference nowhere. In short, the strongest proof of the almighty power of God is that our imagination loses itself in the conception.—*Pascal.*

[12579] Has it not wondrous things many and inexhaustible; wonders on a large scale, and wonders on a small? First, it has beautiful landscapes, which it asks no effort to admire, which we have only to open our eyes and behold. And though landscapes vary in beauty, there are perhaps fewer than we imagine, in which a contemplative eye can discover nothing of the beautiful. Rugged countries, with their purple heather and their wild heights, though wanting in wood and foliage, may not be deficient in sublimity. Tame countries on a dead level, yet with abundance of trees and hedgerows, have, despite their monotony, a pleasant domestic character.—*Dean Goulburn.*

[12580] The lowest musical tone consists of pulsations of air at the rate of about thirty per second; while it is estimated that the undulations of the cosmic ether producing green light are at the rate of 600,000,000,000,000 per second. Man's organization is not elastic enough to respond to all intervening vibrations. If our senses were ten times more numerous than they are, and a hundred times more acute, the larger share of what goes on in the universe would still be unknown to the human race.—*G. F. Wright.*

(2) *Awfulness and grandeur.*

a. As manifested in the sun, the moon, and the stars.

[12581] The ancients saw the splendour of the sun; they felt its warmth; they thanked God for its glory. To David it was, as you know, "as a bridegroom cometh forth out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant to run his course." It was thought a monstrous extravagance when one of the Greek philosophers said that it was a fiery mass, and another that it was about the size of Attica. But what is it to us? Look at the bas-relief on the tomb of Newton in Westminster Abbey, and there you will see the little genius weighing the sun, and the earth, and the planets on a steelyard. Yes, we know its weight; we know its distance; we know its revolution. We know even, of late years, by spectrum analysis, of what metals and gases it is composed. No human language can express its awfulness. The latest treatise on astronomy has warned us that if we call its chromosphere an ocean of fire, we must remember that it is an ocean of fire as deep as the Atlantic is broad. If we speak of its storms, we must remember that those raging vortices of flame tear across its surface as far in one second as the wildest hurricane on earth in a year. If we talk of its eruptions, we must think of streams of burning hydrogen, rushing up 50,000 miles into the sky; and blazing cyclones in any one of which our whole earth would, in one second, be calcined and destroyed. That great orb, as we have discovered, bursts and boils with a horrible impetuosity, such as no human imagination can conceive; and yet this vast, portentous globe of fire is made to subserve the humblest purposes of man. It is but one thirty-second millionth of this sun's light that this earth receives; and yet that mere fraction of its effluence gives man temperate warmth. It gives him golden days. It evaporates the waters. It ripens the fruit. It quickens the seedling. It tinges the odorous blossom of the rose. "What is it that is driving that railway train?" once asked the greatest of our engineers of Dean Buckland, the great geologist, who was then dean of Westminster Abbey, at the party assembled in the house of the illustrious statesman. The party there assembled made many and various guesses. "No," said George Stephenson, "it is none of the things that you have said. It is the sun which is driving that train. It was the sun's heat which was transformed into the vegetative life of antediluvian forests. The forests decayed into coal; the coal feeds the fire; the fire evaporates the water into steam; the expansion of the steam is but the setting free of the stored-up forces of noon-days that blazed upon this world before man was. It is sunlight, latent for ages, which is again brought forth and liberated, and made to work in that locomotive for great human purposes." So spake one whose genius has altered the conditions of modern life; and when we thus know what the sun is—what it does for us—ought not 3,000 years of additional knowledge to have infused new adoration and new intensity into David's words? "It goeth forth from the uttermost part of the heaven, and runneth about unto the end of it again; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." And yet the sun—nay, even our whole solar system—is a mere nothing—is no more in the sidereal heavens than a mote in that sun's beam. —*Archdeacon Farrar.*

[12582] To the ancients and to David the moon was but an ornament of the night, a silver cresset hung by God's hand in heaven to illumine the darkened earth. To us it is, indeed, this, and we thank God for it, and also for its services, unknown to our forefathers, of attracting the waters, and so causing to roll, from hemisphere to hemisphere, that great tidal wave which purifies the world. But we have also learnt with amazement what the moon is. We know that it is a small world, in structure like our own; but without atmosphere, without clouds, without seas, without rivers, rent with enormous fissures, scathed and scorched with eruptive violences, a burnt-up cinder, a volcanic waste, the wreck, for all we know, of some past home of existence, a corpse in night's highway, naked,

fire-scathed, accursed ; and if, in the complications of her silent revolutions,

"She nightly, to the listening earth,
Repeats the story of her birth,"

yet that story presents us with so blank a mystery, that it forces our acknowledgment that it may seem as if its one blank hemisphere was only turned to this earth and its science in mocking irony, as though to convince us, against our will, that what we know is little—what we are ignorant of immense.—*Ibid.*

[12583] Turn to the millions of stars in the Milky Way. Our son is neither more nor less than just one, and one unimportant, star in that Milky Way. To David, when he said that the heavens declared the glory of God, only were known two or three thousand stars visible to the naked eye. To us are known somewhere about fifty millions. To us is known that the Galaxy is but the fused light of stars innumerable, that the nebulæ of the Centaur and the clouds of Magellan are composed of star clusters so infinitely distant that, though separated from us by abysses of the heaven, they seem by myriads to touch each other, so that our whole solar system would be but a speck in the infinite expanse ; and that our whole firmament is but one of some 5,000 firmaments, and that each one of those so-called fixed stars is a flaming sun, perhaps with its attendant planets, of which the nearest of all—the star Sirius—is supposed to be fifteen times larger than our own sun, and is rushing away from the earth at the rate of twenty miles a second, and yet separated from us by a space so inconceivably immeasurable that it is as bright as it was two thousand years ago. And, yet, I say again that the Christian is not in the least appalled by all this vastness. Space is nothing to that God who extends through all extent, and in the hollow of whose hand all those worlds lie as though they were but a single waterdrop. But, by the telescope, better without it—

"Man may see
Stretched awful in the hushed midnight,
The ghost of his eternity."—*Ibid.*

(3) *Beauty and utility.*

a. The greatest richness of beauty appears to be lavished on the minutiæ of nature.

[12584] Many of the greater works of nature appear almost chaotic : there is no order or regularity in the magnificent confusion of volcanic eruptions or of iceberg-drifts ; but there is regularity and a high degree of beauty in the hexagonal crystals of snow, in the structures of the seed-vessel of a moss, and in the sculpture of a microscopic shell. Thus the Diatomaceæ, a group of lowly microscopic organisms of vegetable nature, "have shells of pure silex, and these, each after its own kind, are all covered with the most elaborate ornament, striated, or fluted, or punctured, or dotted, in patterns which are mere patterns, but patterns of perfect and sometimes of most complex beauty. In the same drop of moisture there may be some dozen or twenty forms, each with its own distinctive pattern."—*Duke of Argyll.*

b. Beauty is largely manifested in unity amidst diversity.

[12585] The true theory of beauty is that which admits unity as one of the essential elements, but which also admits of diversity as no less essential. Look at this beautiful flower. It is without doubt admirably connected : unity, order, proportion, symmetry, are there ; for without these qualities reason would be absent, and all things are made with a wonderful reason. But, at the same time, what diversity, what grace in the details, what shades in the colours, and riches in every part! We know not whether to admire the most—this variety, always new, or this unity, everywhere present.—*Cousin.*

c. The apparent want of beauty in some departments may be accounted for.

[12586] God is not bound to make every creature beautiful. He has scattered beauty all around us, in earth and sky, in plant and animal, in man and woman ; but it is not necessary for our happiness and comfort that He should impart to every object qualities which are fitted to raise excited æsthetic feeling. For it is not reckoned the highest taste to have every part of a scene characterized by sublimity or beauty. In historical painting, the grand figures are made to stand out from plain neutral colours. And, once more, God contemplates, in all His works, higher ends than the gratification of æsthetic taste ; and we are not to expect Him to sacrifice utility to grace or ornament. To apply these principles to only one of His examples : No one would say that the camel is as beautiful as the horse or the deer ; yet no one who has true taste will say that it is ugly. The camel is an object of interest to every thinking mind, and has even a sort of beauty, as it is seen performing its beneficent ends in its native clime. It has been shown that what may seem to be deformities enable it the better to fulfil the good ends of its existence. The enlargement of its feet, with their convex soles, allows it to tread easily on the loose yielding sand of the desert ; and the callosities, or pads, upon its legs allow it to lie down and repose on scorching surfaces. And these humps are supplies of superabundant nourishment provided for their long journeys : so that, when deprived of other food, their frames feed on this nutriment ; and it has been observed that, at the close of a long journey, their humps have been much diminished in size. Every organ has thus a purpose, though that may not be the production of beauty.—*J. McCosh, D.D.*

d. Ends and uses are the regulative reasons of all existing things.

[12587] It is precisely the *uses* of things that are most palpable. These uses are to God, no doubt, as to us, the significance of His works. And they compose, taken together, a grand reciprocal system, in which part answers actively

to part, constructing thus an all-comprehensive and glorious whole. And the system is, in fact, so perfect, that the loss or displacement of any member would fatally derange the general order. If there were any smallest star in heaven that had no place to fill, that oversight would beget a disturbance which no Leverrier could compute; because it would be a real and eternal, and not merely casual or apparent, disorder. One grain, more or less, of sand would disturb or even fatally disorder the whole scheme of the heavenly motions. So nicely balanced, and so carefully hung, are the worlds, that even the grains of their dust are counted, and their places adjusted to a correspondent nicety. There is nothing included in the gross, or total sum, that could be dispensed with. The same is true in regard to forces that are apparently irregular. Every particle of air is moved by laws of as great precision as the laws of the heavenly bodies, or, indeed, by the same laws; keeping its appointed place, and serving its appointed use. Every odour exhales in the nicest conformity with its appointed place and law. Even the viewless and mysterious heat, stealing through the dark centres and impenetrable depths of the worlds, obeys its uses with unfaltering exactness, dissolving never so much as an atom that was not to be dissolved. What now shall we say of man, appearing, as it were, in the centre of this great circle of uses? They are all adjusted for him: has he, then, no ends appointed for himself? Noblest of all creatures, and closest to God, as he certainly is, are we to say that his Creator has no definite thoughts concerning him, no place prepared for him to fill, no use for him to serve, which is the reason of his existence?—*H. Bushnell, D.D.*

e. There is nothing useless in nature.

[12588] We live, it is manifest, in the midst of a system every one part of which is adapted with the greatest nicety to every other. We see before us what we reckon a useless plant, and we conclude that the species might be eradicated, and no evil follow. But the conclusion is rash. For the seed of that plant may be needful to the support of some kind of bird, or the root of it to some insect; that bird or insect may serve an important purpose in the economy of the earth; and were we completely to root out that plant bearing seed after its kind, we might throw the whole of nature into inextricable confusion. —*J. McCosh, D.D.*

(4) *Vastness, unity, and continuity.*

[12589] What eye can measure the boundless universe of God? The strongest telescope of the astronomer fails to discover its limits. Beyond all the stars or worlds which we discern through his instrument, we behold the faint gleams of the pale light of still more distant and unknown realms of space, which may be the reflection of still remoter stars, located in parts of the infinite universe which will ever remain hidden to man.

The wonderful rapidity with which light travels has been calculated; the relative distances have been measured between the sun and the planets that revolve round him, and which borrow their light from him; but to express the relative distances of the greater number of stellar systems, words and numbers fail us. Stars which we see glimmering in the heavens because their light is still travelling towards us through immeasurable space, may have been long extinguished. New suns may have come into existence at inexpressible distances from us, which we do not see because the light from them has not reached our eye. So immense is the universe!—nay, not the universe, but merely the small part of it which we can discover from our earth; and this small part, according to the suppositions of the most distinguished astronomers, is far from the glorious centre round which the worlds revolve. The earth, the sun, the myriad stars, float in the great ocean of space, and revolve round a greater sun which, however, remains hidden from our mortal ken. Each hour the globe we inhabit moves fifteen thousand miles, and each day three hundred and fifty-five thousand miles, onward in space. Hourly and daily the sun, with the eleven planets (worlds like our own) and eighteen moons (all of which cannot be seen by the naked eye) belonging to his system, in like manner move along with inconceivable rapidity, without our being able to perceive it. So immeasurable are the distances that separate these worlds belonging to one and the same system, that even after a century's observation, we are hardly able to discern their motion round another—to us unknown—sun.

And these numberless spheres, almost all of which are of infinitely greater magnitude than the globe we inhabit, are intimately connected with each other, in spite of the enormous distances that separate them. Similar to each other in form, they mutually dispense to each other the light which they irradiate, and which is perhaps the same as that which flashes from the thunder-cloud, and which beams so brightly in the Aurora Borealis.

Ah! what is the finest masterpiece from the hand of the first human artist compared with the great, the wonderful, the boundless universe whereon God is enthroned! And all these worlds form a unity—are the intimately connected, closely related parts of a continuous whole.—*H. Schokke, D.D.*

[12590] Consider the facts and phenomena of everyday life, and the relations of common things which we see in the world around us—are these suggestive of the doctrine of continuity or of discontinuity? For example, in the most ordinary phenomena of nature is change *per saltum*, or gradual change, nature's law? We can have no hesitation in answering this question. The gradual dawn of morning's light "shining more and more unto the perfect day"—the gradual deepening of evening's twilight into the gloom of night—the gradual bursting of the buds in spring—the gradual painting of summer's landscape with the more

sombre tints of autumn, have been enshrined in immortal verse in the literature of our own and every other language :

" Noiselessly as the daylight comes back when night is done,
And the crimson streak on ocean's cheek grows into the great sun ;
Noiselessly as the spring-time her crown of verdure weaves,
And all the trees on all the hills open their thousand leaves."

Continuity, and not discontinuity, is taught us by the phenomena of the seasons and the changes of day and night. And what does nature teach us in the vegetable world? Do we find to-day a gigantic oak flourishing where yesterday there was smooth, unbroken sward? Or is nature's mode of working, that there is first a tiny seedling peering through the soil, which a child could crush beneath its foot ; then in the course of years a stout shrub, which a strong man might have difficulty in uprooting ; then, when years and years have come and gone, the mighty giant tree, which bids defiance to the storm? Or, to take an illustration from animal life, and to take of that life the highest form in its highest manifestations, do we find great statesmen, poets, painters, and men of science springing into being fully developed and glittering, Athenae-like, in all their intellectual panoply? Or is it true that all the men who are now in any capacity leaders of thought, of taste, or of action, were once feeble infants, physically helpless, and with just sufficient mental capacity to have a dim consciousness of being? We state these simple questions which everybody can answer, because, although everybody can answer them, many people do not grasp their significance, and because they lead to a suggestive line of thought and investigation. We only need to study the matter to see that everywhere around us—in the changes and phenomena of inorganic nature, in the growth of animal and vegetable life, in the growth and development of that intellectual and moral strength which is the highest attribute of the highest form of life—we have continuity everywhere, gradual change, the less perfect developing into the more perfect ; developing however, let us note—for it is a truth missed by all the opponents and most of the defenders of the doctrine of evolution — not without constant care and supervision, and in many instances not without a hard struggle against adverse environments.—*Prof. Leebody.*

10 Illustrations of God's wisdom in its adjustments.

(1) *As regards the relation of bodies in respect of their properties and quantity.*

[12591] Every one knows how needful the atmosphere is for the sustaining of animal and vegetable life. When air is inhaled by a living being, its oxygen unites with the carbon of the blood to produce carbonic acid ; and the combination, being a kind of combustion, is one source of the heat necessary to the preservation of the frame. But for the skilful composition of the atmosphere, and the greater disposition of oxygen to unite with carbon than with nitrogen, and the production of heat by the chemical combination of carbon and oxygen, it is evident that animation could not be sustained. It appears that a slight change in the composition of the atmosphere, or even the chemical instead of the mechanical combination of its two elements, would render it no longer capable of accomplishing these ends. And it is by a most skilfully arranged process that the atmosphere, amid the changes which it undergoes in fulfilling its offices, is still enabled to retain its purity. The germination of plants, and the respiration of animals, are constantly active in producing carbonic acid, and in setting nitrogen free. But these in excess would give the air a deadly tendency, and this is prevented by a beautiful provision, whereby the carbon of the carbonic acid is absorbed by plants, as being necessary for their sustenance, and in the absorption the oxygen is set free to join the superfluous nitrogen liberated by the other processes. The animal and vegetable kingdoms are thus made to balance and sustain each other, according to a general law ; but this, be it observed, by means of the most skilfully arranged adjustment of the properties of bodies to each other. The different powers which bodies have of absorbing and radiating heat also furnish illustrations of the skilful adjustments with which nature abounds. The grass and foliage absorb heat in the summer season during the day, and again radiate it into the clear atmosphere at night, till the plants are so reduced in temperature as to congeal the moisture floating in the air into the dew necessary to refresh them. Every separate plant has its peculiar power in this respect, and by means of the colour of its leaves keeps the measure of heat, and seeks the measure of dew needful to its well-being.—*J. McCosh, D.D.*

[12592] An earth greater or smaller, denser or rarer, than the one on which we live, would require a change in the structure and strength of the footstalks of all the little flowers that hang their heads under our hedges. There is something curious in thus considering the whole mass from pole to pole, and from circumference to centre, as employed in keeping a snowdrop in the position most suited to the promotion of its vegetable health.—*Whewell.*

(2) *As regards the relation of bodies in respect of time and space.*

[12593] Such adaptations are very numerous. Organs, *e.g.*, appear at the very time they are needed. Teeth, which would be useless to the infant and worse than useless to the infant's mother, appear as soon as they can be of advantage. That mother's milk, too, flows at the very period when the wants of her new-born babe require it. The very birth of certain animals is adjusted to the season of the year,

and to the period of the food most conducive to its well-being, the preparation for the birth of the animal and the preparation for the birth of its food (say the larvæ of insects) dating from different points of time. So in other departments. There are, *e.g.*, in the sunbeam three different principles: the chemical, the luminiferous, and the calorific, each of which has a special function to discharge. The chemical principle has a powerful influence in germinating the plant; the luminous rays assist it in secreting from the atmosphere the carbon which it requires in order to its growth; while the heat rays are required to nurture the seed and form the reproductive elements. Now the first of these is most powerful in spring, the second in summer, and the third in autumn; while each of the others is correspondingly lessened—*i.e.*, each becomes potent at the very time when its action is most required.—*J. McCosh, D.D.*

[12594] We know of infinite time peopled with innumerable existences, of infinite space crowded with unnumbered worlds. The sense of the world's unknown antiquity and of the heaven's inconceivable vastness date respectively from two epoch moments in the history of modern science—one when, about a hundred years ago, some remains of extinct animals were first brought to the great French naturalist Buffon, and then flashed upon his prescient mind the process by which geology was destined ultimately to explain the yet undeciphered hieroglyphs carved upon the rocks by the hand of God; and the other was when, more than two hundred years ago, Sabileo, from the top of Fiesole, first noticed through the telescope the phases of the planet Venus, and so divined the as yet hidden secret of the stars. But how vast are the resultant conclusions! To David the earth probably seemed comparatively a thing of yesterday. We know of ages when the earth may have been a nebulous mass; of ages more when it was certainly one tangled growth of gigantic vegetation; of ages more when it was trodden by huge and fearful lizards—dragons of the prime, tearing each other with lethal armour of incomparable deadliness. We look at a piece of chalk, and we know that to form it took the spoils of millions of living organisms; and the man sinks powerless before the effort to conceive the years which it must have taken, by ordinary processes, to build up the white ramparts of our coasts. And yet the Christian looks with perfect steadfastness, entirely unterrified, over the edge of this yawning abyss of time, because he is clinging fast to the hand of Him to whom a thousand years are but as one day, and one day as a thousand years. Nay, more; he sees how, even through those long ages, the purposes of love were preparing this earth for man; how the monstrous and terrible creatures disappeared; how the era of humanity was also the era of the wheat-ear and the rose; how, if these tangled forests of pine and tree-fern had not flourished and decayed, the great coalfields could never have been formed, without which man's best material achievements would become impossible, and he might have been, over whole regions of the earth's surface, a squalid savage, shivering with intolerable cold. Yes, the knowledge of the deeps which geology reveals, so far from rendering too dim for us, tend only to brighten for us the image of a Father's love. We know that that Father is caring for us now, and geology has simply proved to us that He was caring for our race, it may be, a billion of years before it appeared on our globe.

But if science has thus widened for us the horizons of time, still more illimitably has it widened for us the horizons of space; still more completely has it annihilated man's self-importance about his race, and about the globe on which he lives. To the ancients, for instance, the world was a very centre of all things, and a very image of immovable stability. To us it is an insignificant speck in the heavens of no material importance, and with no centrality about it; and, so far from being fixed, we know that it is rolling, with incessant revolution, on its own axis, whirling, at the immense velocity of 15,000 miles an hour, round the sun, rushing, it may be, with the whole sidereal heavens, round some vast centre, none knows where, "spinning," as one has said, "like an angry midge, in the abyss of its own small system, of which it is but one out of one hundred planets and asteroids, and of which the farthest of these planets rolls three hundred thousand millions of miles round the sun upon its sullen and solitary round."—*Archdeacon Farrar.*

II Inadequacy of its expressions.

[12595] Ancient nature worship and modern nature study are alike dependent for their possibility upon the Scripture truth, that nature, being made by God's word, speaks to us His thoughts. But if I desired conclusive evidence how insufficient is this revelation of itself to guide men to friendly communion with God, where could I find any more conclusive than is furnished by the history both of ancient nature religions and of modern science? Of the one the tendency was more and more to immerse God in nature till He was wholly lost in His own handiwork. Deity was frittered away among elemental powers or their symbols till there was really no God left to hold fellowship with. Of the latter—modern science—the tendency very decidedly is to isolate nature from God, as a wholly separate existence, whose relationship to its Author (if any) is at least unknown. Could any result demonstrate more clearly that fallen man had need for another revelation of the Eternal from that original one in the physical universe, if the true knowledge of God were not to die out of human hearts altogether? —*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

[12596] It does not give always a clear witness, nor speak out in distinct accents, of God's truth and love. Of these it is oftentimes an inadequate expression — yea, sometimes

seems not to declare them at all, but rather in volcano and in earthquake, in ravenous beasts and in poisonous herbs, to tell of strife, and discord, and disharmony, and all the woful consequences of the Fall. But one day it will be otherwise; one day it will be translucent with the Divine idea which it embodies, and which even now, despite these dark spots, shines through it so wondrously. For no doubt the end and consummation will be, not the abolition of this nature, but the glorifying of it; that which is now nature (*natura*), always, as the word expresses, striving and struggling to the birth, will then be indeed born. The new creation will be as the glorious child born out of the world-long throes and anguish of the old. It will be as the snake casting its wrinkled and winter skin; not the world, but "*the fashion* of the world," passing away, when it puts off its soiled work-day garments, and puts on its holiday apparel for the great Sabbath which shall arrive at last. Then, when it too shall have been delivered from its bondage of corruption, all that it now has of the dim and contradictory and perplexing shall disappear. This nature, too, shall be a mirror in which God will perfectly glass Himself, for it shall tell of nothing but the marvels of His wisdom and power and love—*Abp. Trench.*

12 Its "groans and travail" (Rom. viii. 22).

[12597] Nature has been made subject to vanity, has had a yoke and bondage of corruption imposed upon it, yearns and longs to be delivered from this yoke, may be said to be itself looking forward to the day of the restitution of all things, when, at the great Sabbath of the world which shall at length arrive, it shall put off the soiled and work-day garments which it has so long worn, and put on glorious apparel once more. And this is no fancy, that such a change, such a regeneration of nature, such a restoration of its original glories, shall one day be. The world in the midst of which we live is not now what it was as it came from the hands of its Creator. Harsh discords and disharmonies have found their way into it, and make themselves everywhere to be heard. What means, for instance, the volcano, with its clouds of ashes and streams of liquid fire, carrying death and destruction to the peaceful towns and villages that reposed in fancied security at its base? What mean those fierce throes and shakings of the earth, which cause whole cities to topple down on their dwellers, and to crush them beneath their ruins? What the wild tornados, which strew the coasts with the wrecks of ships and the corpses of men? What, again, the pestilential marsh, the very breath of which is fatal to all human life? Or turn your eyes to another province in the kingdom of nature—to the world of animals. Do we not encounter the same discords, the same disharmonies there? Much, very much, to tell us that the state of Paradise has disappeared not for man only, but for the whole creation, whose destinies were made dependent upon his, which fell when he fell, and can only rise again when he rises. What intestine war is ever raging in this province of nature's kingdom; how many animals live only by the death of others! Examine through a magnifying-glass a drop of water, and you will find in it a little world of terror and agony and suffering; you will find there the pursuer and the pursued, the tyrant and the victim; there in little, as around us in large, the signs and tokens of something greatly amiss; echoes in the natural world of the mischiefs which sin has wrought in the spiritual. For man, when he fell, did not fall alone; God had set him as the lord and king of the earth, in whom all its glories should centre, in whom they all should be summed up. Only a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honour, he was to have dominion over the works of God's hands; all things were put under his feet. But when he rebelled against God, this lower nature rebelled against him. The confusion which sin had introduced into his relations to God found its echo and avenging counterpart in the confusions of nature's relations to him; all became out of joint; he dragged all after him in a common ruin. Glimpses, indeed, of the beauty of Paradise still survive; fragments of that broken sceptre, which man once wielded over the inferior creation, still remain in his hands. But much, very much, has disappeared.—*Ibid.*

13 Its pervading influence.

(1) *There is religion to be learnt in all the unbreathing things of nature.*

[12598] It is a meek and blessed influence, stealing in, as it were, unawares upon the heart; it comes quickly, and without excitement; it has no terror, no gloom in its approaches; it does not rouse up the passions; it is untrammelled by the creeds, and unshadowed by the superstitions of man; it is fresh from the hands of its Author, glowing from the immediate presence of the Great Spirit which pervades and quickens it; it is written on the arched sky, it looks out from every star; it is on the sailing cloud and in the invisible wind; it is among the hills and valleys of the earth, where the shrubless mountain-top pierces the thin atmosphere of eternal winter, or where the mighty forest fluctuates before the strong wind, with its dark waves of green foliage; it is spread out, like a legible language, upon the broad face of the unsleeping ocean; it is the poetry of nature; it is this which uplifts the spirit within us, until it is strong enough to overlook the shadows of our place of probation; which breaks, link after link, the chain that binds us to materiality, and which opens to our imagination a world of spiritual beauty and holiness.—*Ruskin.*

14 Man's debt to nature.

[12599] Not on a path of reprobation runs
The trembling earth, God's eye doth follow her
With far more love than doth her maid, the moon.

Speak no harsh words of Earth, she is our mother,
And few of us, her sons, who have not added
A wrinkle to her brow. She gave us birth,
We drew our nurture from her ample breast,
And there is coming for us both an hour
When we shall pray that she will ope her arms
And take us back again.
—*Alexander Smith.*

[12600] This entire moral and visible world from first to last, with its kings and its subjects, its parents and its children, its sun and its moon, its sowing and its harvest, its light and its darkness, its sleeping and its waking, its birth and its death, is from beginning to end a mighty parable, a great teaching of supersensuous truth, a help at once to our faith and to our understanding.—*Abp. Trench.*

[12601] Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege
Through all the years of this our life to lead
From joy to joy; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. —*Wordsworth.*

XI. Special Characteristics of the Divine Work.

1 Perfection of detail.

[12602] In every nature, and in every portion of nature, which we can descry, we find attention bestowed upon even the minutest parts. The hinges in the wings of an earwig, and the joints of its antennæ, are as highly wrought as if the Creator had had nothing else to finish.—*Paley.*

XII. The Purpose of Creation Generally.

1 The glory of the Creator.

(1) *Not to augment the Divine glory but to manifest it.*

[12603] What is the purpose for which the earth was made and man upon it? The reply to this question is, that God made all things for the purpose of manifesting His own perfections. Reason can discover no other cause of creation; and the fact that God made all things for His own glory is recognized in every page of Scripture. But when it is said that God made all things for His own glory, some explanation is necessary. We do not mean by this expression that God made all things, or anything, for the purpose of rendering Himself more glorious than He was from all eternity, for that is impossible, His glory being alike incapable of increase or diminution; but that He made all things for the purpose of making His glorious perfections known. And when it is said that God made all things for the purpose of manifesting His perfections, it is meant that the manifestation was to be made, not to Himself, which is impossible, but to the creatures whom He made. It is obvious, then, that the manifestation was to be made both *by* the creatures and *to* the creatures. They were to be both the manifesters of the Divine perfection and the percipients of these perfections when manifested. Now as the purpose for which every creature is made is that it may, according to its nature, manifest the perfections of God, and perceive them as manifested by itself, and by all other creatures, it follows as a necessary consequence that to do this must be the glory and the happiness of the creature—its being's end and aim: and it follows also, that the higher the degree in which any creature is capable of doing this, the higher is the degree of glory and of happiness which it is capable of attaining and enjoying. —*Marcus Dods.*

[See Section XIII., No. 12.]

2 The happiness, well-being, and development of man.

[12604] There is a preponderance of evidence that the Creator desired the pleasure of His creatures. This is indicated by the fact that pleasure of one description or another is afforded by almost everything, the mere play of the faculties, physical and mental, being a never-ending source of pleasure, and even painful things giving pleasure by the satisfaction of curiosity and the agreeable sense of acquiring knowledge; and also that pleasure, when experienced, seems to result from the normal working of the machinery, while pain usually arises from some external interference with it, and resembles in each particular case the result of an accident. Even in cases when pain results, like pleasure, from the machinery itself, the appearances do not indicate that contrivance was brought into play purposely to produce pain.—*J. S. Mill.*

[12605] They tell that man's world, with all its griefs and troubles, is more emphatically a world of flowers than any of the creations that preceded it; and that as one great family, the Grasses, were called into existence, in order, apparently, that he might enter, in favouring circumstances, upon his two earliest avocations, and be in good hope a keeper of herds and a tiller of the ground; and as another family of plants, the Rosaceæ, was created in order that the gardens, which it would be also one of his vocations to keep and to dress, should have their trees "good for food and pleasant to the taste:" so flowers in general were properly produced just ere he appeared, to minister to the sense of beauty which distinguishes him from all other creatures, and to which he owes not a few of his most exquisite enjoyments.—*Hugh Miller.*

[12606] The universe is made for happiness of one sort or another. There is no happiness in the universe, not even that of the smallest insect, but such as was designed by the Creator. The system, however, was chosen as a whole. The prospective pleasure of the worm had some power as an element determining to the creation as it is—it was a part of that sufficient reason which moved the Divine Being to creative activity in the modes which we witness. But there are grades of happiness, and hierarchies of being. The same impulse of the designing mind which leads to a provision for the sensational happiness of the oyster leads also to the subordination of the oyster to the higher orders of being. The welfare of oysters, of birds, and of men were elements in the final cause which led to the creation as it is. But for the sake of the oysters God would have made the world somewhat different from what it is. But for the sake of the birds He would have made it still more different. Had it not been that man was to be incorporated in the scheme the plan would have been very different indeed.—*G. F. Wright, D.D.*

[12607] Why was it His will to create the universe? Was it in the name of an inward necessity? No, the Divine life was perfect in itself, it was so from all eternity. God had no need of the creation, it could add nothing to His blessedness and glory. He created, not for Himself, but for the innumerable beings that He called into existence. It was not to afford Himself a sublime spectacle that He peopled space with that dust of stars which are worlds. With one sovereign word He caused light to spring from darkness. He stretched out the canopy of the heavens; then He clothed the earth with that covering which is our delight, and said to all the beings He placed there, "Follow the law of life; grow and multiply!" Then He saw that it was good. And yet all was not accomplished. The temple was built, but the priest was still wanting. A voice was needed to reply to Him, a heart to beat only for Him. And God said, "Let us make man in our image."—*E. De Pressensé, D.D.*

[12608] Man was not made for the earth; the earth, from the first, had been preparing for man; each of the successive wrecks to which the earth had been subjected had looked on beyond itself, and had a respect to the coming of man; and each of the new creations which followed had formed part of a system of means of which he was to be the subordinate end. For him, volcanic fires had fused and crystallized the granite, and piled it up into lofty table-lands. The never-wearied water had, for him, worn and washed it down into extensive valleys and plains of vegetable soil. For him, the earth had often vibrated with electrical shocks, and had become interlaced with rich metallic veins. Ages of comparative quiet had followed each great revolution of nature, during some of which the long-accumulating vegetables of preceding periods were, for him, transmuted into stores of fuel; the ferruginous deposits of primeval waters were becoming iron; and successive races of destroyed animals were changed into masses of useful limestone. The interior of the earth had become a storehouse, in which everything necessary was laid up for his use, in order that, when the time should come for him to open and gaze on its treasures—on "the blessings of the deep that lieth under"—on "the chief things of the ancient mountains, and the precious things of the lasting hills," he might gratefully recognize the benevolent foresight of the Being who had prepared, selected, and placed them there. —*J. Harris, D.D.*

[12609] Man was not to be made for the world, but that the world from the first had been made for man; that all its laws were mute predictions of what he would be; that all nature was preconfigured to him, and looked forward to his coming; that the earth also was designed to be a temple for man's worship, where he might find himself surrounded by the symbols of the Godhead—where every object on which his eye may rest is either an "altar of memorial," or an offering to be laid on it. "Even the earth itself, as it goes speeding through space, what should it be but an altar at which he should be perpetually ministering as the high priest of nature?" But geology will give a range to his views of the Divine all-sufficiency beyond all admeasurement; it will admit him to a succession of departed worlds, stored with the monuments of the Creator's inexhaustible resources. Plunge as far back as he may into the past he will still find himself in the province of the same Creator, and surrounded by evidences that "He seeth the end from the beginning." But what impressive views of the same perfections will open on him when he shall come to perceive that all the long series of creations by which the globe is adapted to become his habitation, has distinctly contemplated his own well-being! Were his advent among the creatures to be that of a distinguished being from some paradise above, means for developing his hidden powers, the exquisite adjustment of things to strike him with the kind forethought of the Being who had sent him here, provision for his health and comfort and entire well-being during his stay, could hardly have been more obvious and abundant than they actually are. Of all the species of animated beings that have inhabited the earth, he will be the first to look upon nature with an intelligent eye. Till he comes this glorious volume of the Creator will remain unread; and not only will he be able to interpret nature, it will be his prerogative to employ it for his improvement. The only use which the brute creation unconsciously make of it is that of sustaining and perpetuating their kind. He will employ it also for the same purpose; but this very employment of it may be of a nature to call forth the exercise of his reason, and to tend to aid intellectual progress. So that even in that one solitary respect in

which he and the animals will appear to be placed on a level, he will be able in reality to assert his essential superiority over them; and from it he may date his actual rise above them. They only use and only need some of the present products of the earth. Man may employ the products of every departed world. In his hands the extremes of geological duration may meet. The granite of ten thousand ages back may be made the foundation of his dwelling, or the pedestal of his image. The mountain limestone —petrified exuviæ of departed worlds—may serve to cement and beautify his abode. The wreck of the forests, that for ages waved on the surface of the ancient lands, and the ferruginous accumulations deposited in primeval waters, may supply him with the principal means of his material progress and comfort. From the rich metallic veins which interlace the earth he may derive the means of his choicest ornaments, the representatives of his material wealth, and knowledge "more precious than rubies." Every flood which swept over the ancient continents, and every dislocating earthquake which contributed to the formation of cultivable soils, may reappear in man's science and be converted to his purposes. The loadstone in his hands may become an instrument by which to call the stars to his aid, and to bid defiance to the apparent boundlessness of the ocean, while in quest of scope for his enterprise he steers to a distant region of the globe. The subterranean treasures of the earth contain nothing which he will not be able to use; and who shall say but that the time may come in his history when its stores will prove to have been not unnecessarily great? Surely the creature who will point to little artificial contrivances of his own in proof of his sagacity and skill, will not fail to recognize in these vast perspective arrangements for his coming, convincing indications of a beneficent superintending mind! And surely, as time advances, and new and more profound adaptations of nature rise to view, as man comes to find that his race have been living for ages in the midst of complicated adaptations of which they were unconscious, and which could be developed only as the result of a long series of prior discoveries, but are tending to his development and well-being, his recognition of the creative wisdom and goodness will become more vivid and grateful—and the earth become more sacred in his eyes. It is only in such a world that a creature like man could live and his character be developed. Here every part of his nature will find its appropriate domain.—*Ibid.*

XIII. The Divine Attributes implied in the Act.

[12610] Creation manifests the Divine attributes and perfections—power, wisdom, goodness. So different from the choicest and grandest works of man! Compare any great work—Noah's ark, Solomon's temple, Herod's temple, Egyptian pyramids, the wall of China—and remember the gathering of materials, the time, labour, skill required. Yet the creation was originally—1. Out of nothing, from no pre-existent matter (Heb. xi. 3). 2. The work of the Creator's unaided power. 3. The effect of a single word of command (Psa. xxxiii. 9). 4. In every respect perfect, "very good" (Gen. i. 31). Clever men make machines, and others follow and find out "a great improvement;" God's works never can be improved.—*G. S. Bowes.*

[12611] The first act ascribed to God is that of creating the heavens and the earth out of nothing; and by His fiat alone arranging their parts, and peopling them with living creatures. By this were manifested His eternity and self-existence, as He who creates must be before all creatures, and He who gives being to others can Himself derive it from none; His Almighty power, shown both in the act of creation and in the number and vastness of the objects so produced; His wisdom, in their arrangement, and in their fitness to their respective ends; and His goodness, as the whole tended to the happiness of sentient beings. The foundations of His natural and moral government are also made manifest by His creative acts. In what He made out of nothing He had an absolute right and prerogative: it awaited His ordering, and was completely at His disposal; so that to alter or destroy His own work, and to prescribe the laws by which the intelligent and rational part of His creatures should be governed, are rights which none can question. Thus, on the one hand, His character of Lord or Governor is established, and, on the other, our duty of lowly homage and absolute obedience.—*R. Watson.*

[12612] God has provided everything, He has remedied everything, beforehand. There is in His works a harmony, a beauty, already pre-established. This opinion does not at all exclude the providence or the government of God. A true providence on the part of God demands a perfect foreknowledge; but it demands not only that He has foreseen everything, but also that He has provided for everything—otherwise He is deficient either of the wisdom to foresee or the power to provide. That defect of our machines which renders them in need of repair arises from the circumstance that they are not sufficiently dependent on the workman. Thus the dependence of nature upon God, so far from being the cause of this defect, is rather the cause why the defect does not exist, because it is dependent on a workman too perfect to make a work which needs to be repaired.—*Leibnitz.*

[12613] "All things are *of* God." The stress must be laid on the word *of*. There is not, you observe, any limitation, or exception, or exclusion. Whatsoever there be in earth, or sea, or air; whatsoever there be in the world of sight; whatsoever there be in the world of spirit—animate and inanimate, material and immaterial—is of God as the self-existent, all-

sufficient, and eternal fountain of being and perfection as that from which all being is originally and essentially derived. Perhaps the beginning of the Bible is in general too lightly passed over; Christians coming practically to forget that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." It is so common a thing to behold the splendid developments of nature, to read on her glorious brow the tracery of all that is lovely and majestic, that we fail to give due thought to the boundless power and skill of the Architect who reduced the rude chaos into such a wondrous structure, and caused the huge and shadowy void to teem and glitter with such radiant forms.—*H. Melvill, B.D.*

[See Section XIII., Nos. 8, 13, 16, 18, 22, 28.]

XIV. The Consummation of the Perfect Plan of the World in the Creation of Man.

1 The divinely deliberated resolve.

(1) "*God said, Let us make man*" (*Gen.* i. 26).

[12614] It is the manner of artificers to deliberate much, and to put themselves to more than ordinary pains about their masterpieces. Man was to be the masterpiece of this visible world, and accordingly Moses, speaking of God according to the manner of men, brings him in consulting about so prime a piece. "God said, Let us make man:" whereas most other things were made with a word speaking, "Let there be light, and there was light. Let the earth bring forth, and it was so." Here the Creator calls, as it were, a solemn council of the sacred Persons in Trinity, when He is about to proceed to the making of man, which is to be taken notice of, both because other Scriptures use the plural number where man's creation is spoken of, as in Eccles. xii. 1, "Remember thy Creator:" according to the original, Creators; and Job xxxv. 10, "Where is God my Maker?" Hebrew, Makers. —*Arrowsmith.*

2 The merciful impulse involved.

[12615] When the Almighty would create man He called together before His throne a council of the highest angels.

"Create him not!"—So spoke the Angel of Justice—"he will be unjust towards men, his brethren; he will be hard and cruel in his treatment of those who are weaker than himself."

"Create him not!" said the Angel of Peace: "he will saturate the earth with human blood. The first-born of the race will slay his brother."

"Thou mayest create him after Thine own likeness, and stamp on his countenance the impress of truth; yet he will desecrate with falsehood even Thine own sanctuary"—So said the Angel of Truth.

And they would have said more. But Mercy, the youngest and dearest child of the Eternal Father, stepped to the throne and kneeled before Him.

"Create him!" she prayed: "create him in Thine own image, and as the favoured object of Thy benevolence. When all others, Thy ministers, forsake him, I will still be with him, will lovingly aid him, and make even his errors conduce to his amelioration. I will touch his heart with pity, and make him merciful to others weaker than himself. When he goes astray from the way of truth and peace, when he transgresses the laws of justice and equity, the results of his own errors shall lead him back to the right path, and forgiving love shall convert him."

Then the Father of men created man. . . .

Remember thy origin, O man! when thou art hard and unmerciful. Of all God's attributes, it was Mercy that called thee into existence. And still, for life and all that life includes, thou art indebted to the love and pity that clasps the infant to the mother's bosom.—*Herder.*

3 The material employed.

[12616] Body was formed of the dust of the ground (Gen. ii. 7), thus connecting him with the visible universe, and especially that portion of it which was to be the theatre of his fall and his redemption; formed not as the clay, or the marble, is fashioned into the likeness of a man, but organized from within by the assimilation of the earthly elements, which, under the plastic hand of God, lost their original forms and grew into that wonderful piece of mechanism which constitutes the human frame. Man's material nature proceeded directly from God; formed of dust and therefore capable of resolution into dust (Gen. iii. 19), but also capable of a future renovation (1 Cor. xv. 44); the first element of his being in order of creation, the last in order of restitution (Rom. viii. 23).

[12617] Man was formed of the dust of the ground. Through what process of refinement the different particles which compose the human body passed previous to their combination and union we know not. But this process perfected, each atom was so arranged and disposed, and placed under such laws of affinity and of mutual action, as to bring out that great unity to which we give the name of—body. Every part was contrived with the most exquisite skill, and was wrought into the most curious texture.—*F. Fergusson, LL.D.*

[12618] Dust was its original matter: of dust it was made, and into dust it must be resolved (Gen. iii. 19). The consideration is humbling, and serves to tame the pride of man, who is apt to dote upon his own beauty. Man's body was not made of heavenly matter as the radiant sun and sparkling stars; no, nor yet of the most precious and orient earthly matter. God did not melt down the pure and splendid gold and silver, or powder the precious pearls and sparkling diamonds; but He formed it of the vile and despicable dust.—*Flavel.*

4 Man's connection with a previous creation.

[12619] His lot was cast on the line of pro-

gress at a time when successive races of animal life already belonged to the silence of the past, and when even the last trace of the existence of many of them had perished. He had joined the march of creation at a point when the worlds of the dinotherium and the mastodon had passed away, and their very sepulchres had been buried. His own body came from their dust. Parts of his physical structure commemorated theirs. The air he breathed had been exhaled by the giant ferns and ancient palm forests then lying deep and fossilized in the crust of the earth. The tree of life had its roots in a grave. The dew which "watered the whole face of the ground" had glittered in the light of former worlds. Traces of a recent chaos and creation were around him.—*J. Harris, D.D.*

5 His unique position in creation.

(1) *It is conceded on all hands that man, the human frame and its indwelling spirit, is as yet the highest outcome of creation.*

[12620] The highest result of evolution is at present to be seen in man. That is conceded on all hands. They may talk as they will of the glories of the past, and magnify them in depreciation of the present; but no sane philosopher would deny that man is the head and crown of things up to this present. No one has pretended to discover in the grave of the buried past a creature of a higher type than the human, or to produce any evidence of the existence of a being who can be compared for a moment with man. Nay, science has failed utterly to produce any trace of the link which she affirms must connect man with the lower creation. The race of man-like apes, or ape-like men, has yet to be found. At present, however, the two may seem to approach each other, all trace of the meeting-point is wanting; the orders are two, not one. But this is by the way. Man is certainly the highest creature known to science. It seems to be clear that the world which most fits the nature of the human, in which man finds his habitation, whose forms and forces are most in tune with his organization, and ministrant to his needs, must be the highest form of the world. The world in which man was brought forth, and in which he lives, must in the nature of things, looking at it purely from the scientific point of view, be the most perfect, beautiful, and highly developed world.—*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*

[12621] In the last work, we have God here giving His last stroke, and summing up all into man, the whole into a part, the universe into an individual; so that whereas in other creatures we have but the trace of His footsteps, in man we have the draught of His hand. In Him were united all the scattered perfections of the creature; all the graces and ornaments, all the airs and features of being were abridged into this small yet full system of nature and divinity; as we might well imagine that the great Artificer would be more than ordinarily exact in drawing His own picture.—*South.*

[12622] Theodorus Mopsuestenus quaintly observes:—"When God created man, His last and best work, this was as if a king having built a great city, and adorned it with many and various works, after he had perfected all, should command a very great and beautiful image of himself to be set up in the midst of the city, to show who was the builder of it."

[12623] As great men are wont, they often erect a stately building, then cause their own picture to be hung up in it that spectators may know who was the chief founder of it: so when God had created the fabric of this world, the last thing He did was the setting up His own picture in it, creating man after His own image. —*Arrowsmith.*

6 The making of woman.

(1) *As a helpmeet for man.*

[12624] What Adam could not find for himself to complete his happiness is supplied directly by the Creator in accordance with the purpose already announced. "I will make him a helpmeet for him." The desire for companionship and social intercourse had been awakened in man's bosom. He felt a void in his existence, but saw no prospect of its being filled up. Although God's purposes and promises of kindness anticipate the wishes of the creature, yet He awakens the feeling of want before bestowing the blessing. So here: He had seen man's need; He expressed His determination with respect to it; and now that the man is cognisant of his condition, and ready to welcome the provision about to be made, the Creator proceeds to give effect to His purpose. —*D. Macdonald, M.A.* (*condensed*).

[12625] The particulars of this important event are—1. The mode of the woman's formation (Gen. ii. 21, 22). 2. Her introduction by the Creator to the man (ver. 22). 3. The man's reflections on the occasion in respect to the woman's origin and their mutual relations (vers. 23, 24). 4. The peculiar circumstances of condition and character of this heaven-united pair (ver. 25). "The sleep of a labouring man is sweet." This was no doubt pre-eminently the case with the sleep of Paradise. The man had finished the first work to which he had been called; he had exercised his faculties for the first time. He had searched for a being like himself, and fitted for companionship; but although he found none such, yet his search was not in vain, seeing that he was thereby made aware of the distinguished, if solitary and singular, position he occupied. He may have been weary of the search when the sleep of heaven settled down upon his eyes; and, while thus resting in the arms of his Creator, that object was found for him which he himself had searched for in vain. It was thus that to the first man was realized the declaration of the Psalmist (Psa. cxxvii. 2), without human co-operation or observation. The woman was given to the man as a pure gift of God, a tender, veiled mystery.—*Ibid.*

7 Man's original nature and primitive state.

(1) *The Divine impress.*

a. Man was a created copy, not an essential image of God.

[12626] The Scripture never speaks of the Divine image in man, but always of man as formed after the Divine image. And this indicates a profound principle of Biblical thought. It presupposes God to account for man. Thus by "the Divine image," the Bible does not mean those elements in man from which an idea of God may be framed, but conversely those features in the Divine Being of which man is a copy. If we read what the Bible says of God in relation to the world, and what of God in Himself, we shall get leading lines for its delineation of man; always premising that of the Divine idea man is a created copy, not, like the Logos, an essential image.—*J. Laidlaw, M.A.*

[12627] The two expressions (image and likeness) imply in the Hebrew, the one a fixed, the other a progressive, state of resemblance. The former expression referring to that fixed or inalienable resemblance to God which man retains in his νοῦς, or rational nature, the latter referring to that progressive likeness to God which we gain as we grow in holiness, that purity of heart by which we see God, and as we lose which, we lose with it also the sense of the presence of God.—*J. B. Heard, M.A.*

(2) *He was made after the likeness of the blessed Trinity.*

[12628] Man was formed, God tells us, in the image of God, after their likeness, the likeness of the all-holy Trinity. Every power and faculty of the soul bore some trace of its likeness to its Maker. They were shadowy representations of some aspect of the infinite mind. In God all is one. His attributes are, even in thought, inseparable from Himself. His power, His will, His goodness, His greatness, His wisdom, His blessedness, are Himself. For He is one simple essence. The very Persons of the all-holy Trinity, in that mode of existence which belongs to God, in-exist in one another in perfect oneness.

In this image and likeness of the all-perfect God man was made, his various powers shadowing attributes of God, which, although inseparable from God, we, as finite, can only conceive of (as far as we can conceive of them) when set before us apart. But so, the immortality of man is a faint shadow of the eternity of God; man's forethought, of the Divine providence; man's intuition, of the Divine intelligence; man's memory, of the Divine knowledge; man's imagination, of God's conception of all things possible, though they are not. More plainly yet man's will, power, desire to communicate himself, love, complacence, tenderness, justice, truth, are imparted copies of God's infinite perfections. Nay, those three especially, memory, reason, will, have, both in earlier and later times of the gospel, been thought to be a shadow of the all-holy Trinity in itself.—*Dr. Pusey.*

(3) *He was potentially, but not actively, perfect.*

[12629] The supposition that man was not merely potentially, but actually, perfect from the earliest moment of his creation, besides contravening the true theory of human nature, is out of harmony with the inspired narrative, and impairs our view of the Divine goodness. That his nature was potentially perfect, or capable of all perfection, we affirm, in effect, when we say that he was made in the Divine image. Besides which, being created with all his capacities in a state of mature readiness for exercise and development, and having nothing to unlearn, his progress would be distinguished by corresponding rapidity. But still that progress, however rapid, implied successive steps —greater attainments to-day than yesterday, and, in consequence, preparation for greater still to-morrow. And the method employed by God to secure this progress exhibits Him in the relation of a wise paternal instructor aiming at once to engage the affections and to improve the opening faculties of his child. In this light, the test of the creature's obedience (not to eat of a certain fruit) appears to be, what it really was—a first lesson in moral obligation—morality made easy.—*J. Harris, D.D.*

(4) *Man's creation after the Divine model constitutes his real dignity.*

[12630] When I read in Holy Scripture that man was made in the image of God, I find in this grand word not only the titles of his nobility, but also the consecration of his rights. Man is a sacred thing, because God is in him and covers with His divinity, as with a shield, the most wretched as well as the most powerful. If I see God in my brother, I recognize that to commit an offence against his conscience is to offend God Himself, it is sacrilege. If, on the contrary, I no longer discern in him any ray of divinity, then there is no longer for him any absolute right; he is subject to the chances and brutalities of force; man may be taken as an instrument if he is only an animal. I shall treat him as an animal; I can yoke the human beast to my triumphal car. Room for the strong! As soon as the idea of God grows dim, the notion of right disappears. It is a splendid day for despots, and Cæsars have only to appear, the world is ready for them. It is the day of men of prey, according to the eloquent word of Père Gratry. It is no longer so, when I see God in my brother; in defending his right I defend the cause of God Himself.—*E. De Pressensé, D.D.*

[12631] All our titles to nobleness are contained in these words: "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Let us make *man*. What is that, but that man is the creature of God, the son of the living God!

First mark of greatness! Let us make him *in our image*. What is that, but that he bears in himself the image of divinity! Second mark of greatness! Let us *make* man, said the Creator. What is that, but that called into existence by an act of sovereign liberty, man being made in the image of God, has received from Him this royal gift of liberty! Third mark of greatness! —*Ibid.*

(5) *The primitive condition of man as a sinless being.*

a. A condition of perfect happiness and peace.

[12632] In the constitution of the first man, considered as a sinless being, we behold a creature whose every susceptibility and power tends to enjoyment. Regarded merely as a partaker of animal existence, the consciousness of life alone is the consciousness of enjoyment. Additional enjoyment was provided for him in the gratification of each of those appetites which relate to the support and continuance of life. As a percipient being, every organ of sense was an avenue of distinct and additional grateful sensations. As a reflective and rational being, the mere exercise and expansion of his intellectual faculties would occasion him enjoyment: improvement itself would be pleasure. The emotions of novelty and curiosity, of anticipation and hope, of cheerfulness and love, are only other names for happiness; and yet this is the only class of emotions of which unfallen man would be conscious. The consciousness of a power to will—of his doing what he did from choice—this was another and a deep source of enjoyment. And, then, the highest, the most exquisite of all, was the consciousness that he had done morally right, that he had acted in harmony with the objective and supreme will.—*J. Harris, D.D.*

[12633] Peace, as God meant it, is the primitive state of humanity—a state towards which, though it has long since fled, humanity still ever yearns again; the hope of which forms the rosy fringe of the future, and to restore which is the effort and the aim of all true religion.—*Ewald.*

8 His antiquity.

(1) *The Bible, in the first chapter of Genesis, declares a limit to the antiquity of man, but does not fix it.*

[12634] The only materials which Scripture offers for the calculation are genealogies given for purposes of pedigree, and evidently not chronologically complete. As was to be expected, different writers have from these given very different computations of time. According to the construction adopted in the Septuagint, the creation of man occurred 7517 years ago; according to Dr. Hales, 7294; according to the Vulgate, 6067; according to Bishop Ussher, 5967. Secular history, as we have seen, goes back nearly 6000 years, so that the interval between that and the creation seems to require some extension of the ordinary chronology, to allow for the immediate antecedents of secular history and for the whole palæolithic period. If for these, and the first human period recorded in the Book of Genesis, we allow 2000 years, we get a term of about 8000 years as warranted by deductions from history, geology, and Scripture. If further geological evidence should at any time require it, we might without violence to the Scripture commence our chronology a few years earlier still. With geological records of great uncertainty, and written records declared to be incomplete for this purpose, we submit that it is sufficient for us to show a near approximation between science and Scripture, and to express the conviction, founded on actual facts, that the more geology is studied and its facts ascertained, the closer does this approximation become; already this is the case in the judgment of some leading geologists, for undoubtedly the tendency of modern observation and discovery has been to bring down and modernize the mammalian and prehistoric epochs.

Finally, the matter stands thus—the exact age of man on the earth is not ascertainable by science, but science shows to us a number of converging probabilities which point to his first appearance along with great animals about 8000 years ago, and certainly not in indefinite ages before that.—*J. R. Pattison, F.G.S.*

9 The three leading theories in regard to man.

[12635] In regard to man there are three views. First, the race are supposed to have descended from one pair in the garden of Eden. It has been believed that they were perfect at their creation; that by moral delinquency they fell into degeneration; and that, in consequence, all the race proceeding from them have inherited their degeneration, and fallen into various degrees of barbarity and savagism. And the whole work of religion is supposed to be the work of recuperation from this evil.

A second view is, that the history in Genesis of the creation of men relates to only one line of the human race; and that there were besides that several distinct origins, each one setting in motion, as it were, a line of distinct sequences. There are indications in the Bible itself, it has been held, of the existence of other peoples on the earth. It is said that Cain, going forth, deplored the danger which threatened him; but if it is true that Adam and Eve and their sons were the only human creatures then on the earth, what had he to fear? It is claimed that the fact that he recognized his peril, and feared that in wandering forth he would be slain, indicates that there were existing populations at that time.

A third view regards man as but an extension of the animal kingdom; or, it asserts that by the gradual process of unfolding, men came into being in strict analogy with all the other unfoldings which are going on in the animal or vegetable world. This view gives great offence

to the common people on moral grounds. It gives great offence to them also on scientific grounds, it being declared to be a hypothesis, in its nature unprovable—a mere imagination—a reasoning which, like the progress of a kangaroo, proceeds by mighty jumps. Unbridged intervals there are, in the proof, it is said, which are fatal to scientific certainty. It is declared that the whole of it is rather an instance of the fantasy of science, or of the imaginative powers of scientific men, than of a calm, cool, collected view, and the deductions which are to be drawn from it.—*H. W. Beecher.*

XV. Man's Threefold Constituency of Body, Soul, and Spirit Distinctively and Conjointly Considered.

1 The body.

(1) *Its nature.*

a. Not man, but man's possession.

[12636] No one can by any possibility mistake his body for himself. It is *his;* it is not he.—*Cardinal Newman.*

[12637] Plato in his Phædon represents Socrates as saying in the last hour of his life to his inconsolable followers, "You may bury me if you can catch me." He then added with a smile, and an intonation of unfathomable thought and tenderness, "Do not call this poor body Socrates. When I have drunk the poison, I shall leave you, and go to the joys of the blessed. I would not have you sorrow at my hard lot, or say at the interment, 'Thus we lay out Socrates;' or, 'Thus we follow him to the grave, and bury him.' Be of good cheer: say that you are burying my body only."—*Joseph Cook.*

(2) *Its dignity, beauty, and exquisite structure.*

[12638] The body of man is just the grandest temple in this universe. It is the portion of common dust cut off by the Divine augur to be the enclosure of a soul. It is the soul's presence-chamber, to which those who would meet it must come; the forum wherein it transacts its business and meets its high occasions; the shrine from which go forth its oracles, and whence the skilled draw forth its auguries, and forecast the secrets of its destiny. The Lord "spake of the temple of His body," and He was the first who ever spake of it. The body is not a building, artfully constructed, which will stand its time whether tenanted or not; it is made what it is by the mind which separates and consecrates it, which makes of the common earth a holy shrine, consecrated to sacred uses, worthy the inspection and earnest study of the wisest of men.—*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*

[12639] Nothing can be conceived which would surpass the workmanship and the elegance of this fabric. It sets forth pre-eminently the Divine art—the art of God in fitting up a structure including within itself so many miracles. Whether we look to what is external or internal—to what is more essential, or to what is rather ornamental, we are equally impressed and surprised. Nor is the comeliness more striking than the utility of the various parts. How beautifully and aptly subservient is every member to the great functions and offices for which it was designed! How adapted is the eye for the transmission of light—the ear for the conveying of sound—the hand for manipulation—the tongue, with its manifold appendages, for the utterance of speech—the bones for strength and support—the muscles for locomotion—the lungs for respiration—the heart for circulation—the brain for sensation and volition! How adapted are the solids for incessant action, and the fluids for continual motion! Not more remarkable is the multiplicity of parts which enter into the composition of the body—the connection between these several parts, and the variety of functions which the whole performs, than is the close dependence of one function upon another. Such is the construction of this wondrous mechanism as to contain within itself the means of ministering to its own growth and preservation. It can draw its supply of materials from without—can appropriate to its own use every form of organized matter, and can convert it by a subtle chemistry into blood, and by sending this through the whole frame can nourish and vivify and stimulate every part. Here is a mechanism which has no parallel! Here is a workmanship which proclaims itself to be Divine! Here are the clearest manifestations of infinite wisdom and benevolence—and the most glorious!—*F. Ferguson, LL.D.*

2 The soul and spirit.

(1) *The Divine act in the bestowal of soul and spirit on man.*

[12640] God having given him an animal life out of the dust of the ground, and a spiritual life by emanation from Himself, the soul, or *tertium quid* of body and spirit, is next referred to. "So man became a living soul." He awoke, as Moses was said to have died on Pisgah, beneath the kiss of God.—*J. B. Heard, M.A.*

(2) *The soul's capacity for growth.*

[12641] First, when looking after the measures of the soul, we very naturally lay hold of what first occurs to us, and begin to busy ourselves in the contemplation of its eternal duration; whereas the eternal duration of the soul, at any given measure, if we look no further, is nothing but the eternal continuance of its mediocrity, or comparative littleness. Its eternal growth in volume and power is, in that manner, quite lost sight of, and the computation misses everything most impressive in its future significance and history. Secondly, the growth of the soul is a merely spiritual growth, indicated by no visible and material form that is expanded by it and with it, as in the growth of a tree, and therefore passes comparatively unnoticed by many, just because they cannot see it with their eyes. And then, again, thirdly, as the human body attains to its maturity, and finally, in the decays of age, becomes an apparent limit to the

spiritual powers and faculties, we drop into the impression that these have now passed their climacteric, and that we have actually seen the utmost volume it is in their nature ever to attain. We do not catch the significance of the fact that the soul outgrows the growth, and outlives the vigour of the body, which is not true in trees; revealing its majestic properties as a force independent and qualifiedly sovereign. Observing how long the soul-force goes on to expand after the body-force has reached its maximum, and, when disease and age have begun to shatter the frail house it inhabits, how long it braves these bodily decrepitudes, driving on, still on, like a strong engine in a poorly-timbered vessel, through seas not too heavy for it, but only for the crazy hulk it impels—observing this, and making due account of it, we should only be the more impressed with a sense of some inherent everlasting power of growth and progress in its endless life.—*H. Bushnell, D.D.*

(3) *Its distinction from brain.*

[12642] Certainly the brain is the organ of thought, the instrument of mind. But every instrument requires a player, otherwise, though all harmonies should be contained in its strings, and it were capable of expressing every musical idea, it would be but silent. Materialism confounds the necessary condition of activity with its cause.—*Luthardt.*

(4) *Its connection with Divine knowledge.*

[12643] By the soul we understand that side of human nature upon which we are in contact with the infinite, and with God, the infinite personality: in the soul therefore alone is it possible to know God; and the correctness of our knowledge must depend eminently on the healthy, active, and fully developed condition of our organ.—*F. W. Newman.*

(5) *Its living reality.*

[12644] The epithet חַנָּה which we translate *living*, the Arabic renders *a rational soul;* and indeed none but a rational deserves the name of a living soul. For all other forms or souls, which are of an earthly extract, do both depend on and die with the matter out of which they were educed; but this being of another nature, a spiritual and substantial being is therefore rightly styled *a living soul.* The Chaldee renders it *a speaking soul.* And indeed it deserves a remark, that the ability of speech is conferred on no other soul but man's. Other creatures have apt and excellent organs; birds can modulate the air and form it into sweet delicious notes and charming sounds; but no creature except man, whose soul is of a heavenly nature and extraction, can articulate the sound, and form it into words, by which the notions and sentiments of one soul are in a noble, apt, and expeditious manner conveyed to the understanding of another soul. And, indeed, what should any other creature do with the faculty or power of speech, without a principle of reason to guide and govern it? It is sufficient to them that they discern each other's meaning by dumb signs, much after the manner that we traded at first with the Indians; but speech is proper only to the rational or living soul. However we render it, a *living*, a *rational*, or a *speaking* soul, it distinguisheth the soul of man from all other souls.—*Flavel.*

[12645] Life is the one universal soul which, by virtue of the enlivening Breath and the informing Word, all organized bodies have in common, each after its kind. This, therefore, all animals possess, and man as an animal. But, in addition to this, God transfused into man a higher gift, and specially inbreathed—even a living (that is, self-subsisting) soul, a soul having its life in itself. "And man became a living soul." He did not merely *possess* it, he *became* it. It was proper being, his truest self, the man in the man. None, then, not one of human kind so poor and destitute but there is provided for him, even in his present state, "a house not built with hands." Ay, and spite of the philosophy (falsely so called) which mistakes the causes, the conditions, and the occasions of our becoming conscious of certain truths and realities for the truths and realities themselves—a house gloriously furnished. Nothing is wanted but the eye, which is the light of this house, the light which is the eye of this soul. This seeing light, this enlightening eye, is reflection. (The διάνοια of St. John, 1st Ep. v. 20, inaccurately rendered *understanding* in our translation. To exhibit the full force of the Greek word we must say *a power of discernment by reason.*) It is more indeed than is ordinarily meant by the word Reflection; but it is what a Christian ought to mean by it, so to know too whence it first came and still continues to come—of what Light even this light is but a reflection. This too is thought; and all thought is but unthinking that does not flow out of this, or tend towards it.—*S. T. Coleridge.*

(6) *Its individuality.*

a. At once its dignity and responsibility.

[12646] Each separate soul is distinguishable from all other souls, no one being in all things precisely like to another. Each one is the embodying of a distinct idea of the mind of God. Each one is ordained to accomplish some one distinct purpose of God. This is the soul's vocation. God left unnumbered multitudes of creatures whose existence was possible. He left them to remain in their nothingness. They might have served Him far better than oneself, or than multitudes that are teeming about us. But there was something which determined God to form the souls He formed—to form one and not another. This it is which God loves; not the whole mass, but the individual. Love has no meaning when applied to abstract ideas of multitudes; it is, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). It is towards individual persons that love is stirred. Divine love, like human love, centres on individual forms, and embraces distinct objects. It is not

merely the general nature of man that God loves, but it is the special form that nature takes; that which makes each one to be what he is, distinct from every other. The individuality of the separate members of the body of Christ is not inconsistent with the unity of the entire body, "the perfect man," which alone is the fulfilment of the complete idea in which the mind of God had delight when He willed to create humanity. It is this distinct personality that gives their dignity to individual men. Their special dignity is not that they share the common human nature, nor even merely that they share in this nature in Christ the same flesh in which He is seated on the eternal throne. The special dignity of each individual redeemed man is, that he, sharing this nature which is united to God, has in it a form of life peculiar to himself, something that no other being has; that he has to do for God what no one else is so called to do, or perhaps is so able to do; that he can exhibit in himself a character of grace, and fill a place, a sphere of glory, which no one but he himself is called to occupy, or perhaps can in all respects occupy as God purposed. From this fact of distinct individual existence flow all duties and responsibilities, all relations and claims of service in the momentous issues of life. They are, if fulfilled, the accomplishment of our special calling of God; if neglected, they are the measure of our utter loss and eternal condemnation.—*Canon Carter.*

[12647] Nothing is more difficult than to realize that every man has a distinct soul, that every one of all the millions who live or have lived, is as whole and independent a being in himself as if there were no one else in the whole world but he. To explain what I mean: do you think that a commander of an army realizes when he sends a body of men on some dangerous service that each of those poor men has a soul, a soul as dear to himself, as precious in its nature as his own? Or does he not rather look on the body of men collectively, as one mass, as parts of a whole, as but the wheels or springs of some great machine, to which he assigns the individuality, not to each soul that goes to make it up? This instance will show what I mean, and how open we all lie to the remark, that we do not understand the doctrine of the distinct individuality of the human soul. We class men in masses, as we might connect the stones of a building. Consider our common way of regarding history, politics, commerce, and the like, and you will own that I speak truly. We generalize, and lay down laws, and then contemplate these creations of our own minds, and act upon and towards them, as if they were the real thing, dropping what are more truly such.—*Cardinal Newman.*

[12648] Survey some populous town: crowds are pouring through the streets; some on foot, some in carriages; while the shops are full, and the houses too, could we see into them. Every part of it is full of life. Hence we gain a general idea of splendour, magnificence, opulence, and energy. But what is the truth? why, that every being in that great concourse is his own centre, and all things about him are but shades, but a "vain shadow," in which he "walketh and disquieteth himself in vain." He has his own hopes and fears, desires, judgments, and aims; he is everything to himself, and no one else is really anything. No one outside of him can really touch him, can touch his soul, his immortality; he must live with himself for ever. If we have but once seen any child of Adam, we have seen an immortal soul. It has not passed away as a breeze or sunshine, but it lives; it lives at this moment in one of those many places, whether of bliss or misery, in which all souls are reserved until the end.—*Ibid.*

(7) *Its immortality.*

a. Nature of the soul's immortality, and the universal assumption of a life after death.

[12649] Immortality is the perpetuity of existence after it has once begun. "If a man die, shall he live again?" is a question which has naturally agitated the heart and stimulated the intellectual curiosity of man, wherever he has risen above a state of barbarism, and commenced to exercise his intellect at all. "Without such a belief," Max Müller well says, "religion surely is like an arch resting on one pillar, like a bridge ending in an abyss." It is therefore very gratifying to the believer, and a fact worthy of notice, that the affirmative on this question is assumed more or less by all the nations of the earth, as far as our information reaches at the present day, although it is true their views often assume very vague and even materialistic forms. We concede that the views of most rude heathen nations, both ancient and modern, respecting the state of man after death are indeed dark and obscure, as well as their notions respecting the nature of the soul itself, which some of them regard as a kind of aerial substance, resembling the body though of a finer material. Still it is found that the greater part of mankind, even of those who are entirely uncultivated, though they may be incapable of the higher philosophical idea of the personal immortality of the soul, are yet inclined to believe at least that the soul survives the body, and continues either for ever or, at least, for a very long time.—*Prof. James H. Worman, A.M.*

b. New Testament teaching as to the doctrine.

[12650] When Jesus Christ appeared in this world, the Epicurean philosophy, the fables of poets of a lower world, and the corruption which was prevalent among the nations had fully destroyed the hope, to say nothing of a belief in future existence. It was left for Him to declare the existence of the soul after death, even though the "earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved" (2 Cor. v. 1), with great certainty and very explicitly, not only by an allusion to the joys that await us in the future world, and to the dangers of retribution and

Divine justice (Matt. x. 28), but also in refutation of the doctrines of the unbelieving Sadducees (Matt. xxii. 23; Mark xii. 18; Luke xx. 28). . . . Christ and His apostles did more to illustrate and confirm the belief in the immortality of the soul, as cherished at the present day, than had been done by any nation, even the Jews included. "He first gave to it that high practical interest which it now possesses," and it is owing to Christianity that the doctrine of the soul's immortality has become a common and well-recognized truth—no mere result of speculation, as are those of the heathen and Jewish philosophers, nor a product of priestly invention—but a light to the reason, and a guide to the conscience and conduct. "The aspirations of philosophy, and the materialistic conceptions of popular mythology, are found in the gospel transmitted into a living, spiritual, and Divine fact, and an authoritative influence, not only touching the present life, but governing and directing it."—*Ibid.*

c. Early Christian views.

[12651] In the early Christian Church the views on the immortality of the soul were very varied. There were none that actually denied, far from it, nor even any that doubted its possibility. "But some of them, *e.g.*, Justin, Tatian, and Theophilus, on various grounds, supposed that the soul, though mortal in itself, or at least indifferent in relation to mortality or immortality, either acquires immortality as a promised reward, by its union with the spirit and the right use of its liberty, or, in the opposite case, perishes with the body."—*Ibid.*

d. Philosophical argument.

[12652] We might take up a line of argument used by philosophy, both in ancient and modern times, from Socrates down to Fichte, to prove the immortality of the inner being; an argument derived from the assertion that the soul being a unity, is, as such, incapable of decay, it being only in case of the complex that a falling to pieces or a dissolution is conceivable. But the abstruse nature of this method leads us to renounce a line of argument from which we freely confess we expect little profitable result. For, after all, what absolute proof have we of this unity of the soul? Can we subject it to the microscope or the scalpel, as we can the visible and tangible? It must content us for the present simply to indicate that the instinct and consciousness of immortality have nothing to fear from the most searching examination of the reason, but find far more of confirmation and additional proof than of contradiction in the profoundest thinking. Further, that this instinct and consciousness do actually exist, and are traceable through all the stages and ramifications of the human race, . . . is confirmed to us by our opponents themselves; . . . that there is in man something which is deeper and stronger than the maxims of a self-invented philosophy, namely, the divinely created nobility of his nature, the inherent breath of life, breathed into him by God, the relation to the Eternal, which secures to him eternity.—*E. Stähelin.*

(8) *Its invisibility and illegibility.*

[12653] The soul is formless, is shadowless. No eye beholds it, no hand handles it; no pencil may draw its lineaments. The mother that gave birth to her child; that overhung the cradle; that carried her babe imbosomed; that studied the girl's girlhood, youth, and womanhood, till the cloud of love opened and hid her in the wedded life—even the mother does not know the girl nor the woman. Nor does he that takes her know her, when she is taken; nor even she herself. Our life is hinted, but it is hidden. It gleams out at times; it flashes in sparks upon us. None has seen the full orb, or known the full measure of it. We stand before each other as volumes of books. The binding and lettering are plain enough; the contents are unknown, or but dimly suspected. We are like books in which some things are to be hidden from the common reader as unsafe, and at every few paragraphs the critical things are expressed in a dead language. So in human life, the simplest things are read; the interior things are not legible.—*H. W. Beecher.*

(9) *Its diffusive unity.*

[12654] As God applies Himself to all creatures, without dividing His unity or weakening His power, giving light with the sun, burning with fire, refreshing with water, and bringing forth fruit with the trees, so is the soul dispersed through the body, and penetrates all the parts thereof. She is as noble in the hand as in the heart; and, though applying herself to the disposition of the organs, she speaks by the mouth, sees by the eyes, and hears with the ears, yet she is but one spirit in her essence; and in these differing functions her unity is not divided nor her power weakened.—*G. Moore, M.D.*

(10) *Its stupendous value.*

[12655] Our Saviour, in these words (Matt. xvi. 26), takes, as it were, a pair of balances in His hand—the balance of the sanctuary—and He puts the whole world in one scale, and the soul of man in the other; this little sparkle of divinity in one scale, and the great globe in the other. But the soul of man, this spiritual being, this heavenly sparkle, does mightily outweigh the great world itself, the huge fabric of the creation—the world is weighed in the balance and found too light.—*N. Culverwel.*

(11) *Its conscious invincibility.*

[12656] The soul, secured in her existence, smiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point;
Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds.
—*Joseph Addison.*

(12) *Theories respecting the soul.*

a. The theory of pre-existence.

[12657] The theory of the soul's pre-existence

is broadly at issue with the Biblical and Christian doctrine of man, which makes man the synthesis of body and spirit: since, according to that theory, man existed in his completeness, as spirit, before he was sent to inhabit a human frame. And in this way such a theory cuts up by the roots that profound argument for the future resurrection of the body, which is suggested by the fact that the body is, under the terms of man's natural constitution, the soul's one adequate organ and instrument; it reduces the body to the rank of a temporarily indwelt shell, which might be escaped from with advantage. Nor is the verdict of our experience at issue with that of Christian doctrine in this particular. If we have all of us existed in some previous state of being, how is it that no living memory records any one distinct event in this presumed phase of past existence? If all traces of this supposed pre-existent life should have been blotted out from one memory, or from the majority of memories, how are we to explain their entire disappearance from all? Such universal oblivion of a great past is in fact inexplicable, except upon the extreme and violent hypothesis of a miraculous annihilation of memory in all spirits that have been heretofore united to human forms. The failure of any one memory to recall the supposed life of human souls in another sphere of being is as unfavourable to the supposition at the bar of reason as its other demerits must be held to be condemnatory of it in the judgment of faith.—*Canon Liddon.*

b. The theory of Traducianism.

[12658] We take the position, that the entire man proceeds by generation from the parents. We do not say, we do not mean, that the soul is generated by the soul, or the body by the body. But man, in his soul, body, and spirit, is an unit composed of diverse elements, yet having but one personality, in which the soul is the element of universal efficiency. Of that personality, efficient thus, it is that we predicate generation, and, according to the maxim that like begets like, we hold the child, in its entire nature, to be the offspring of the parent. The entire race of man was in our first parents, not individually and personally, but natively and seminally, as the plant is in the seed. When Adam was created, among the powers which constituted his nature was that of generation. His substance was made to be an efficient cause, of which posterity, taken in their whole being, physical and spiritual, are the normal and necessary effect. Thus, in Adam and Eve, the human race had not a potential existence merely; but God, in creating the first pair, put into efficient operation the sufficient and entire cause of the existence of their seed.—*S. J. Baird, D.D.*

[12659] Traducianism is most in accordance with the language of Scripture, as when Adam is said to have begotten a son in his own likeness, after his image (Gen. v. 3); which can hardly refer to the body merely. It seems also to agree better with St. Paul's doctrine of the first and the second Adam, as the respective heads of fallen and regenerate humanity. It may appeal to the creation of Eve, which was not like Adam's, *ex nihilo*, but by a derivative process; and to the statement of Scripture that God rested on the seventh day from works of creation (Gen. ii. 2), which, though it does not exclude the idea of *creatio mediata*, does seem to imply that creation in the strict sense then ceased; not indeed as a power or idea inherent in the Godhead, but in reference to this world of ours. The reply that the creation of souls is not a new thing, because Adam's was created, seems hardly to deserve notice. But, above all, the Traducianist may ask, as Augustine of old, how the transmission of a sinful nature is to be explained on the other hypothesis? If God creates each soul directly, it must be supposed pure as it comes from the Creator; is it consistent with His goodness to allow it to become subsequently contaminated by union with an infected body, as pure water suffers defilement by being poured into a filthy vase? Can we suppose that an immaterial substance is capable of being contaminated by a material? If, as Romanists hold, original sin is merely a defect, the loss of original righteousness, the difficulty may be lessened, but is by no means removed; for why should God implant a pure soul in a defective organization? In short, it is difficult to see how a rigid Creationist theory can avoid making God the author of sin. It may be added that the principal seat of sin surely is the soul, not the body; but if, as all admit, sin is transmitted from the parents, it seems as if the subject in which sin inheres must, in some inexplicable manner, share in the transmission. —*E. A. Litton, M.A.*

[12660] If the soul is propagated, it must be from both parents or from one; and again, in its totality or in part only. If from both, two souls would coalesce into one, which is absurd; if from one, the other would be excluded from the process. If the soul is propagated in its totality, the parents would be left without one; if in part, then it is divisible. It must be propagated either from the body or the soul (of the parents); if the former, it is material, if the latter, the difficulty just mentioned recurs. The soul is not immortal if it does not exist independently (*per se*); but it cannot thus exist if it is propagated.—*Ibid.*

c. The theory of Creationism.

[12661] The more generally received doctrine is known as Creationism. Each soul is an immediate work of the Creator: He is perpetually creating souls out of nothing, and infusing them into bodies. He creates each soul at the moment when the body which is destined for it enters really and properly on its inheritance of life. Creationism recognizes that sense of the immateriality of the human spirit which expressed itself falsely in the doctrine of a pre-

existence, and which is so seriously compromised by Traducianism. Personal spirit, it is asserted by the Creationist, cannot be transmitted from one created life to another, like animal vitality. Yet Creationism recognizes the truth for which the Traducianists contended against the advocates of the soul's pre-existence, when it maintains that the soul and body are strictly contemporaneous in their origin, and that they have profound and ineffaceable relations to each other.—*Canon Liddon.*

[12662] According to a one-sided Creationism, every individual proceeds from the hand of his Creator as pure and undefiled as the first Adam; and the apparent dependence of the individuals upon the preceding members of the series, the notion of inherited qualities, and especially the phenomenon of natural sinfulness, become quite inexplicable.—*Bp. Martensen.*

d. The truths to which the separate theories of Traducianism and Creationism may lay claim.

[12663] The truth to which Traducianism may lay claim consists in this: that every human individual is a product of the natural activity of the species, just as this is determined by the peculiarities of the race, the family, and the parents. But the truth of Creationism lies in this: that the universal natural activity, by means of which the species propagates itself, and new souls are formed, that this mysterious natural activity constitutes the instrument and means for the individualizing activity of the Creator, that each single human being therefore is a new manifestation of the Divine will, which thus prepares for itself a peculiar form of its own image. Each of these views is only true when it affirms its own antithesis. The Scriptures acknowledge both points of view—"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. li. 5), are the words of the Psalmist confirming Traducianism. But at another place the Psalmist also bears witness that the providential eye of the Creator watches over the birth of the individual, when he says: "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." "My substance was not hid from Thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect" (Psa. cxxxix. 14-16). And the Lord says to Jeremiah, "I *formed* thee in the belly" (Jer. i. 5).—*Ibid.*

(13) *The essential difference between the souls of men and animals.*

[12664] It is evident that beasts are provided with the means of receiving sensations. Quadrupeds and birds have as many senses as human beings; they want neither sight, hearing, smelling, taste, nor feeling. Indeed, there are some beasts which possess certain senses in much greater perfection than men. Many of the actions of beasts resemble those that spring from the free-will of men. They consult their own ease, they follow their own peculiar inclinations, without any external impulse. They possess consciousness; and they remember things which they have seen, heard, smelt, tasted, felt, and done. They are also capable of being taught certain things. From hence we conclude, in opposition to Descartes, that beasts are not mere machines; but that they are capable of forming some ideas, and consequently possess a soul. But here comes our question. In what respects does this soul differ from the reasonable soul of man? Beasts have not the power of holding with each other a reasonable and connected discourse. It may perhaps be replied that the sounds which they utter are to them in place of speech. This cannot altogether be denied. On the contrary, it must be granted that by their various tones they signify feelings and inclinations which men express by words. But on this point we must make some important remarks. The sounds uttered by beasts are not very numerous; they bear no proportion to the great number of words which men are obliged to employ for the purpose of a reasonable conversation. A nightingale can vary her tones more than any other bird; but it cannot be perceived that she possesses more than twenty variations. Among dogs we can scarcely reckon ten. An ape, though in his form he approaches the nearest to man of all brutes, and though by his actions it is evident that he has very lively ideas, yet has very few different tones in his voice. Such a deficiency of the power of communicating ideas is a strong presumption that their souls are of a meaner sort than those of men. We will, however, endeavour to prove it more clearly. There are birds which have learned to whistle certain airs. In these cases they exhibit a greater number of variations in their voices than they do with only their natural songs; by which it appears that their vocal organs have the power of producing more tones, and of connecting them in a more complicated manner than is required by their natural songs. Yet, notwithstanding this power, it has never been found that such a bird has invented a new melody. They whistle nothing that they have not learnt; and, too, if they are taught more than one air, it seldom happens that they are skilful enough to sing each air perfectly, and without confusing it with the others. Hence we perceive that they not only pay little attention to the sounds they utter, but that they are absolutely without the faculty of invention. On the other hand, a man, even though he has never learned music, is able to compose various melodies, and also to sing them correctly. And though a bird can scarcely learn two or three melodies, and sing these but imperfectly, yet a child of three or four years old can learn more melodies, and sing them through without the least mistake. No bird would do this though he should live to be a hundred.

We will take yet one more instance of this proof of the inferiority of the irrational animals. There are birds whose tongues are of so perfect a formation as to enable them to pronounce many articulate words. For example, a parrot learns many words sometimes singly, sometimes connected into sentences, and frequently utters

them as distinctly and correctly as a man ; yet he cannot be made to use them according to their meaning, or in any way that shows he attaches rational ideas to them. It is merely by chance if he ever rightly applies them to any existing circumstances ; but a child, when he knows but a few words, always uses them to express his ideas, and very easily catches their meaning.

Similar deductions respecting their inferior nature may likewise be drawn from other birds; from bees, spiders, and various other animals, at whose admirable labours we are justly astonished. The bees build the cells in which they deposit their honey with surprising and mathematical accuracy. The spiders prepare their webs as skilfully as if they measured them with a compass. Birds build their nests with such singular art that we can only wonder at them ; and the actions of many beasts are equally extraordinary. But they have not therefore a reasonable soul. In all they do, they are but following a natural impulse, as will appear certain, if we only consider their constant uniformity. The nests of birds, the webs of spiders, and the cells of bees have all the most exact mutual resemblance ; there is not the smallest trace of any individual peculiarity ; and they repeat their work every year without inventing anything new.

But let us take only an apprentice who is learning some trade or mechanical art. He follows the instructions of his master, but that is not all. He reflects ; he thinks he can accomplish his work in some other way ; he invents something. He often works quite differently from his master, and often surpasses him in every respect. Who cannot here perceive a great difference between the soul of a man and of a beast? And who is there that will not acknowledge that the skill of the man and of the beast arises from a mental constitution essentially and evidently distinct?—*Reinbeck.*

(14) *The mysterious unity and interrelations of body, soul, and spirit.*

[12665] The mysterious union of the living soul with the corporeal frame is so close and so intimate that these two thus united are absolutely necessary to make up the one compound being—man. Neither would of itself be sufficient. The body might be perfect in every part and in every property, but without the vital spirit it would be an inert mass, or at the best a mere animal nature. The soul might be endowed with every possible attribute and excellence, but denied "an earthly house" in which to reside, it would rise to the rank and the order of angelic existence. And yet close as is the union between these two there is no confounding of their nature. The body does not so absorb the spirit as by incorporation to make it part of itself. Nor is the soul so linked to the body that it cannot exist and act separately from it. Mysterious is the bond of union ; but the two natures are perfectly distinct.—*J. Ferguson, LL.D*

[12666] There is no greater mystery in nature than the union betwixt the soul and body : that a mind and spirit should be so tied and linked with a clod of clay ; that while that remains in a due temper it cannot by any art or power free itself. It can by an act of the will move an hand, or a foot, or the whole body, but cannot move from it one inch. If it move hither, or thither, or by a leap upward, do ascend a little, the body still follows ; it cannot shake or throw it off. We cannot take ourselves out ; by any allowable means we cannot, nor by any at all (that are at least within mere human power) as long as the temperament lasts. While that remains, we cannot go ; if that fail, we cannot stay, though there be so many open avenues (could we suppose any material bounds to hem in or exclude a spirit) we cannot go out or in at pleasure. A wonderful thing! And I wonder we no more wonder at our own make and frame in this respect—what so much akin are a mind and a piece of earth, a clod and a thought, that they should be thus affixed to one another?—*John Howe.*

[12667] I do not think that the materialist is entitled to say that his molecular grouping and his molecular motions explain everything. In reality, they explain nothing. The utmost he can affirm is the association of the two classes of phenomena, of whose real bond of union he is in absolute ignorance. The problem of the connection of soul and body is as insoluble in its modern form as it was in the pre-scientific ages.—*Prof. Tyndall.*

[12668] Just as oxygen and hydrogen gas, when uniting in certain fixed proportions, lose all the properties of gas and become water, a substance which seems to have little or nothing in common with its two constituent elements, so the animal and the spirit, combined in certain proportions, as definite as those of oxygen and hydrogen, though not as easily described by numerical ratios, produce a third and apparently distinct nature, which we call the soul.—*J. B. Heard.*

[12669] The body is the soul's ancient acquaintance and intimate friend, with whom it hath assiduously and familiarly conversed from its beginning. They have been partners in each other's comforts and sorrows. They may say to each other, as Miconius did to his colleague with whom he had spent twenty years in the government of the Thuringian Church : "Cucurrimus, certavimus, laboravimus, pugnavimus, vicimus et viximus conjunctissimé ;" "We have run, striven, laboured, fought, overcome, and lived most intimately and lovingly together." Consuetude and daily conversation begets and conciliates friendship and love betwixt creatures of contrary natures.—*J. Flavel.*

[12670] Scripture never makes the spirit subordinate to the soul. It is essentially the monarch, the nearest in rank to the beings above, the

immediate channel of communication with higher powers. Through this, man has communication with the Holy Spirit, yea, and with the evil spirit. And the soul is affected by it as to the inner world, even as the same is by the flesh as to the outer world. And as they who suffer the affections of the soul to be led by the appetites of the flesh are in Scripture denominated carnal, so they who suffer the motions of the spirit to be subject to the affections of the soul are denominated by the term "of the soul." Such, to take the best, are they who submit their reason to their imagination, their understanding to their feelings. At all times they are the great promoters of error, and may be inclined to either extreme of austerity or of laxity. The latter seems to have been the case in the days of Jude. Once, indeed, the flesh, though never the soul, is apparently mentioned as the immediate subject of the Holy Spirit, where Joel prophesies the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh.—*R. W. Evans, M.A.*

[See Section VI., Vol. II.]

XVI. The Institution of Natural Law in Divine Government.

1 Definition of natural law.

(1) *Negatively.*

a. Not an entity.

[12671] A law of nature is a thing conceived, and not a thing that [objectively] exists; and, therefore, can neither act, nor be acted upon.—*Sir W. Hamilton.*

(2) *Positively.*

a. The human apprehension of phenomena.

[12672] We are forced to regard things under conditions of time and space and the like, and the consequence is that phenomena are grouped together according to certain rules. We find that for us (such is the constitution of our powers) the sequence of phenomena is this and not that. Partial sequences are compared and combined, and thus more general sequences are discovered. But however far we may go we never go beyond ourselves. The law at last is a law for men: its form depends on limitations which are characteristic of men. We have not the least reason for supposing that it has any absolute existence. For it is obviously a very different thing to say that things when observed by men will be observed by them under such and such limitations, and therefore according to such and such laws, from saying such and such are the laws of things in themselves and for all intelligent beings. And if we know nothing of the laws of things in themselves, how can we know anything of things in relation to God?—*Canon Westcott.*

[12673] When we speak of mechanical, chemical, and physiological laws, as governing certain classes of phenomena, the idea conveyed is, that matter in certain circumstances undergoes certain changes, and that everywhere and always it undergoes the same changes, the circumstances being the same. But it is conveyed besides that the ground of this constancy is law, that is, a fixed order, not caprice, not contingency, not uncertainty; but distinct, determinate, inviolable arrangement.—*J. Young, LL.D.*

b. The properties of bodies, or their power of producing changes on each other.

[12674] Consider the power which all matter has to attract other matter—which oxygen has to combine chemically with carbon in certain proportions—which an alkali has to destroy the sourness of an acid—which an acid has to redden vegetable blues—which light has to blacken chloride of silver, and the power which the cellular tissues of living bodies possess of absorbing contiguous matter. We must always remember that properties, in order to action, require an adjustment of two or more bodies to each other.—*J. McCosh, D.D.*

c. The relation of the cause in actual operations to its effects, or the action of two or more bodies so adjusted that their properties operate.

[12675] While the power of the sunbeams to colour the vegetable juices may be regarded as a property, the sunbeams and juices so acting as to colour the leaves may be regarded as a cause in actual operation. The power of oxygen to combine with iron is a property of the oxygen, but a property having reference to the iron; the oxygen and iron concurring to produce rust, is an example of a cause. We have also illustrations of causes in the co-operation of the oxygen and carbon, of the alkali and acid, of the cellular tissues and the inorganic substances on which they work. It is only in the sense now before us that we can speak with propriety of the action of a law of nature. But let it be observed that such a law, when in continued action, implies a continuation of the relation of two or more bodies to each other.—*Ibid.*

d. A generalized set of facts, or objects and events grouped together by points of resemblance.

[12676] We have observed that all quadrupeds are mammalia, and that children are of the same species as their parents, and we call these general facts, laws of nature. Of this same description are the laws of the revolution of the seasons, of human mortality, of the distribution of the plants over the earth's surface, of the variation of the magnetic needle, and those empirical laws regarding heat and electricity which scientific inquirers are so earnestly seeking to discover in the present day. We see at once how these generalized facts or laws differ from causes. That day and night follow each other may be represented as a general law; but we cannot speak of the night causing the day, or the day causing the night. Using the term "law of nature" in the sense of a generalized fact, we cannot speak of the action

of a general law, or ascribe to it a power of production.—*Ibid.*

f. The necessary and inevitable results which spring from the nature of things.

[12677] All beings have their laws; the Divinity has His laws; the material world has its laws; the intelligences superior to man have their laws; beasts have their laws; man has his laws.—*Montesquieu.*

[12678] Laws are the necessary relations resulting from the nature of things.—*Ibid.*

2 The Divine origin and source of natural laws.

(1) *All law implies the existence of a power, or person whose method it is, and whose will it expresses.*

[12679] A law supposes an agent and a power; for it is the mode, according to which the agent proceeds, the order according to which the power acts. Without the presence of such an agent, of such a power, conscious of the relations on which the law depends, producing the effects which the law prescribes, the law can have no efficacy, no existence. Hence we infer that the intelligence by which the law is ordained, the power by which it is put into action, must be present, at all times and in all places, where the effects of the law occur; that thus the knowledge and the agency of the Divine Being pervade every portion of the universe, producing all action and passion, all permanence and change. The laws of matter are the laws which He, in His wisdom, prescribes to His own acts; His universal presence is the necessary condition of any course of events; His universal agency the only organ of any efficient force.—*Whewell.*

[12680] The mystery of the universe and the meaning of God's world are shrouded in hopeless obscurity, until we learn to feel that all laws suppose a lawgiver, and that all working involves a Divine energy.—*Alexander Maclaren.*

[12681] The laws of nature can no more administer themselves than the laws of the land. Just as the laws of the land imply the existence of an authority, a magistrate, who will act on them and assert them, so the laws of nature bear witness to an unseen force, or power, or person, who imposes and enforces them, rewarding those who obey, punishing those who violate them. This power we call God. We ascribe to a personal and Divine source what Matthew Arnold is content to name that "stream of tendency by which all things fulfil the law of their being;" for we know of no stream which does not flow from some source, and we know of no adequate source of universal law save the Maker of heaven and earth. So that our first and simplest conception of God, the conception we derive from the facts of the physical universe, is that He is the source of physical law.—*British Quarterly*, 1874.

[12682] The word law—and the thought of which it is the sign—we maintain refers us back from itself to its origin and author. It contains two ideas, will and power; a law (if the word be really meant for anything and be not a mere blind to our ignorance) is expressed will and exerted power. If the well-established conclusion of science be that all the operations and changes of matter are invariable, and to our apprehension necessary; indicating no such thing as contingency, irregularity, caprice; when it is added that this is their law, the real meaning, we maintain, can be no other than this, that some will chooses that it should be so, and some power secures that it shall be so.—*J. Young, LL.D.*

(2) *All law is dependent on Divine invisible agency.*

a. Matter is ruled by God, as the body is ruled by the soul.

[12683] Matter obeys God as the body obeys the soul. Every human act, unless it become automatic, demands a distinct volition, whereas the Divine impress suffices, apparently without further intervention. The lovely flowers bloom, richest perfumes flow, the lofty trees wave, the swift light speeds, with obedient spontaneity, for ever. Matter, in all its phases, obeys with unfaltering accuracy the primal command.—*McCormac.*

b. There is every indication in the universe of a Divine Presence.

[12684] God is law, say the wise; O Soul,
and let us rejoice;
For if He thunder by law, the thunder is yet
His voice,
Speak to Him, thou; for He hears, and spirit
with spirit may meet,
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than
hands and feet.—*Tennyson.*

c. The very fact of man's capability to manipulate, though unable to change natural laws for his own purposes, argues no less power in the supreme Creator of law.

[12685] We have no reason to think that man is able to suspend or modify any of those universal rules or properties, impressed on matter, which we call laws of nature. He does not seem to be able either to create or to annihilate the smallest quantity of matter or the feeblest amount of force. Take what natural laws we will—whether of attraction, or crystallization, or chemical affinity; of motion, or heat, or light, or electricity; of vegetable or animal life; or any others—we must accept them as fixed, ultimate facts, beyond our power to change. Yet we know from our daily experience that, within the sphere of his action, man can modify the consequences of natural laws, and direct their operation, so as to alter the course of events to an almost unlimited extent. Unable to subvert a single physical law, man working under them, as the conditions of his activity, can employ them all for his own purposes, and by his will

set in motion whole trains of events which otherwise would never have come to pass.

Now, if it be a fact of universal experience that man's will, while unable to suspend or alter a single law of nature, is yet able to change and guide the succession of events to an incalculable extent, we cannot reasonably think that the Creator of man has less power over the course of the world. If we believe in Him at all, we must credit Him with the ability to exert, if so He wills, a directing influence over the course of events without the necessity of suspending or abrogating any one of the laws which have been impressed by Him on nature. The touch of His hand cannot be less efficacious than the touch of man's hand. Providence may guide and rule without in the least degree violating natural law and order.—*Brownlow Maitland, M.A.*

[12686] I exercise a discretionary providence within a limited scope. I own a field, I will suppose. I may make that field an orchard, a desert, or a wilderness. I am possessed of wealth. I may send with it comfort and joy through a score of else wretched homes; or, by my penuriousness, I may make my own home cheerless and desolate. There is here no infraction of general laws; but I insert my own will so as to make these laws do my bidding. I do not stop or overturn the chariot; but I take the reins, and the wheels move as I would have them move. Can God's power be less than man's? On the other hand, may not man's action upon nature under law interpret God's action upon nature under the laws which He has made supreme, and which He no more transcends than He suffers man to violate them? Man disturbs not the normal relation between cause and effect, or antecedent and consequent: no more does the Divine Providence. But as man, to effect his purposes, so lays hold on the course of Nature as to modify the current of events, yet without deranging the laws of causation; in like manner may the Divine will interpose with reference to man's deserts or needs, so that the laws of causation shall be undisturbed, and yet events shall flow in an entirely different channel from that which they would have taken had man's deserts or needs been other than they are.—*A. P. Peabody, D.D.*

[12687] The sway of natural law, or the rule that every event has a natural cause or causes, does not exclude the action of the human *will* in some cases, as a force producing a new resultant. At the command of Jehu "two or three eunuchs" threw Jezebel out of a window. As the body descended, a philosopher might have remarked that the line of its motion was a parabolic curve, and the velocity of descent constantly accelerated—sixteen feet in the first second, forty-eight feet in the next, and so on, in obedience to the law of gravity. The curvature of the line would show that, besides gravity, there was a projectile force, which if it were traced to the muscles of the eunuchs' arms would by no means bring one to the end of the inquiry. The motion of the muscles resulted from heat liberated by the oxidation of the muscles themselves, and previously stored up in the arm through the food taken into the stomach. The food grew in the shape of sheep and corn; the sheep were dependent upon grass; the corn and grass depended on rain and sunshine; the rain itself was raised in vapour from the sea through the action of the sun's rays—the source of all the motion is in the sun, and the current of successively dependent natural events from that source downwards is unbroken. Unbroken but *diverted*, new-directed, for at some point the stream of events was touched by the volition of the eunuchs, and the after-flow was such as Jehu desired and the eunuchs determined. Certainly, as Professor Huxley says, our volition counts for something as a condition of the course of events—a truth which can be verified experimentally as often as we like to try, and therefore one of the highest truths. . . . It seems a fair inference from this, that the continued necessary evolution of new states and events from those which preceded is not of itself a disproof of the existence of a will superior to man's, and "counting for" more than man's, as a condition of events that fall out.—*G. St. Clair.*

d. The very fact that Nature's laws do not enforce themselves postulates Divine guidance.

[12688] Nature's laws are only the methods in which the energies behind them put forth their might. And what are these energies? If you put the question to Science, she has, as yet, no answer ready. But in the doctrine of the conservation of energy she tells us that the sum of the actual and potential energies in the universe is a constant and unalterable thing, unaffected by the mutual action of these forces themselves; and in the doctrine of correlation of forces she informs us that one force may be transmitted into another; and so she prepares the way for the inference drawn by one of her own apostles, Mr. Alfred Wallace, to the effect that all force is at last resolvable into will-force, and that there is behind the operations of all secondary causes a guiding force in the will of the Supreme Intelligence. And so, at length, as the latest conclusion of one of her chiefest apostles, Science has reached the earliest postulate of revelation and is acknowledging that the laws of nature are the common operations of Divine power, depending entirely for their existence and continuance on the Divine wisdom and will.—*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*

[12689] Laws of nature are rendered subservient to purpose in nature by applying other laws by means of mechanical or other contrivances, just as in art. In the wing of a bird and in a tubular column is secured the greatest strength, with the greatest lightness of material. Then the character and nature of these laws, if they are laws of rational character, rational laws

of intelligence, establishes the idea of Creator and Ruler!—*Clark Braden.*

[12690] We are, by the discovery of the general laws of nature, led into a scene of wider design, of deeper contrivances, of more comprehensive adjustments. Final causes, if they appear driven further from us by such extension of our views, embrace us only with a vaster and more majestic circuit. Instead of a few threads connecting some detached objects they become a stupendous network which is wound round and round the universal frame of things. Our conviction that the artist works intelligently is not destroyed, though it may be modified and transferred when we obtain a sight of his tools. Our discovery of laws cannot contradict our persuasion of ends.—*Whewell.*

[12691] Water, fire, air, plants, animals, the physical nature of man, in short, all the great natural forces, through all their products, however many and various, compose *one* world. Nay, more; science emphatically declares that all worlds, all the innumerable host of heaven, compose *one* universe. All are dependent the one on the other, all interact on each other, and come under one and the same series of physical sequences. *We* cannot, therefore, as the prescientific ages did, parcel out the universe among a multitude of separate deities. Science knows of no pantheon. There must be one dominant and supreme power which rules over all. And this power, which sits behind the laws of nature, must be inconceivably great and wise. If it were not wise and strong beyond our reach of thought, the universe, instead of being a harmony of invariable and beneficent sequences, would break into ruinous and irremediable confusion; disaster would tread on the heels of disaster, and the end would be destruction and death. What, then, shall we call this power? how name it? *We* call it God. Others, hiding their ignorance in unmeaning and self-contradictory phrases, may call it "the stream of tendency," ignoring the fountain from which the stream flows. *We* say that law implies a lawgiver, that power implies a person from whom it proceeds; and we worship God as the *sole* source of the forces and laws of nature.—*British Quarterly Review*, 1874.

[12692] If we mean by law the observed regularity with which God works in nature as in grace, then, in our contact with law, we are dealing, not with a brutal, unintelligent, unconquerable force, but with the free will of an intelligent and moral Artist, who works, in His perfect freedom, with sustained and beautiful symmetry. Where is the absurdity of asking Him to hold His hand or to hasten His work? He to whom we pray may be trusted to grant or to refuse a prayer, as may seem best to the highest Wisdom and the truest Love. And if He grant it, He is not without resources; even although we should have asked Him to suspend what we call a natural law. Can He not then provide for the freedom of His action without violating its order? Can He not supersede a lower rule of working by the intervention of a higher? If He really works at all; if something that is neither moral nor intelligent has not usurped His throne—it is certain that "the thing that is done upon earth He doeth it Himself."—*Canon Liddon.*

[12693] "If I take brass, glass, and other materials, and fuse them, the product is a slag. This is what physical laws do. If I take those same materials, and form them into a telescope, that is what mind does." The significance of this is obvious. So far as the matter can be tested by us, natural forces left to themselves produce, not order and contrivance, but disorder and chaos; only when the powers of the human will are applied to them, are results of an opposite character produced—and surely the conclusion lies near at hand—if a human finite intelligence is required to form a microcosm, another and infinite intelligence is required to form the macrocosm. In this world we everywhere see mind struggling with and controlling the blind forces of nature, making heat, electricity, and the rest do the work of intelligence, nor do we find any other force, save mind, which does this; by what warrant is it assumed that elsewhere and everywhere beyond the range of man's activity this work is done by the forces themselves?—*W. Turner.*

[12694] In all physical action there is the presence of two or more bodies with their properties, and an adjustment as the condition of their operation. It is this circumstance which renders matter so inert in itself, and so dependent on the Governor of the world. Matter can act only when arrangements are made for it, and can act beneficently only when the arrangements are beneficent. But the power of making arrangements cannot be found within the capacity of dead matter. The skill and benevolence shown in these arrangements conduct to the belief in a skilful and benevolent cause. The argument for the existence of God is thus widened, and rendered as extensive as the action of the physical universe.—*J. McCosh, D.D.*

[12695] Natural laws may be proved to be unchangeable and uniform in their operation; but there is a long interval between the laws and the events that come to pass. The laws are the conditions under which all actions are performed, and all events occur; but they do not determine what any particular action or event shall actually be. Fire burns; but whether it shall consume our houses, or cook our food, or keep up the vital warmth of our bodies, or supply the force to carry us along with the speed of a bird, depends on the application of it, and the circumstances under which a directing will chooses that it shall act. There is not an event that happens of which we can be sure that no element has operated in its causation other than the laws

and forces of nature, including among them vital energy and even human volition. In the production of every event there is room for the working of subtle and secret influences, the origin and exercise of which no observation of ours, aided by all the helps that science can furnish, could possibly unmask. In other words, there is room for a controlling but imperceptible providence.—*Brownlow Maitland, M.A.*

e. The unreasonableness and ingratitude of failing to recognize God in the uniform working of physical law.

[12696] We speak of the laws of nature till at length we come to forget that nature is nothing but a verbal fiction. The Guide of nature is the God of nature. Those things which nature is said to do are by Divine art performed, using nature as its instrument. Nor is there any such art or knowledge Divine, in nature herself, working not by the guide of nature's works. We are too much disposed to dwell on second causes, and comparatively to overlook the first. And thus we strip nature of its loveliest charm, and life of its choicest comfort—speaking of the processes of nature when we ought to be admiring the operations of Divine benevolence; and talking of chance and accident when we ought to trace the fingers of Divine providence. —*H. Melvill, B.D.*

[12697] How unreasonable, as well as ungrateful, the conduct of those who fail to discover the presence of God in His works, and that because of the existence of these laws, so beautiful in themselves, and benignant in their aspect towards us. No one will affirm that the manna was the less bountiful proof of the care of God, because, in order to suit the convenience of the Israelites, it did not fall irregularly, but at periodical intervals, and was gathered every morning, that those who partook of it might be strengthened for the journey of the day. And will any one maintain that our daily food is less the gift of God, because it is sent not at random, but in appointed ways, and at certain seasons, that we may be prepared to receive it? Does it not appear as if it were the very frequency of the gift, and the regularity of its coming, which lead mankind to forget the Giver? It is as if a gift were left every morning at our door, and we were at length to imagine that it came alone without being sent. It is as if the widow, whose barrel of meal and cruse of oil were blessed by the prophet, had come at length to imagine that there was nothing supernatural in the transaction, just because the barrel of meal did not waste, and the cruse of oil did not fail.—*J. McCosh, D.D.*

3 Complexity of their nature.

[12698] So far from general laws being able, as superficial thinkers imagine, to produce the beautiful adaptations which are so numerous in nature, they are themselves the results of nicely balanced and skilful adjustments. So far from being simple, they are the product of many arrangements; just as the hum which comes from a city, and which may seem a simple sound, is the joint effect of many blended voices; just as the musical note is the effect of numerous vibrations; just as the curious circular atoll-reefs met with in the South Seas are the product of millions of insects. So far from being independent principles, they are dependent on many other principles. They are not agencies, but ends contemplated by Him who adjusted the physical agencies which produced them. As such they become the rules of God's house —the laws of His kingdom; and whenever we see such laws, there we see the certain traces of a Lawgiver.—*Ibid.*

4 Their distinction from causes.

[12699] The *laws* of nature are not to be confounded with *causes*. There can be no laws of a thing until the thing itself is caused or made. They presuppose such causes, or volitions, of which they are the effects or manifestations. In other words, they are the rules by which God is pleased to regulate the phenomena of nature. The existing *form* of the physical constitution, therefore, is entirely dependent on the will of God. Every one of its laws, when creation is viewed on a comprehensive scale, is, for anything we know, as strictly provisional as any of the temporary enactments of the Jewish ritual. The regularity of nature, for unnumbered ages, is quite compatible with subsequent changes in its constitution. Its present uniformity is only conditional. Indeed, every destructive earthquake, though itself the result of general laws, is, in so far as it is destructive, a breach of that uniformity and stability of nature, for which the animal is made, and shows that such uniformity is not inviolable. While the successive appearance of races of animals, entirely unknown to pre-existing nature, shows that it is a uniformity as compatible with the addition of new creations as with the destruction of old ones. Still the order of sequence, which each law implies, being established, the animal is under physical obligation or necessity to respect it; and inevitably suffers if found in a wrong relation to it.—*J. Harris, D.D.*

[12700] When an event is produced according to a known law of nature, the law of nature is called the cause of that event. But a law of nature is not the efficient cause of any event; it is only the rule according to which the efficient cause acts. A law is a thing conceived in the mind of a rational being, not a thing which has a real existence; and therefore, like a motive, it can neither act nor be acted upon, and consequently cannot be an efficient cause. If there be no being that acts according to that law, it produces no effect.—*Reed's Essays.*

5 Their relativeness.

(1) *They are relative to man, and do not explain either the origin or the preservation of things.*

[12701] On the day of man's creation it was

that law first subjectively reigned on earth. Prior to that event the so-called laws of nature were mere modes of Divine operation, known only to the mind of the Creator. But a being had now come who could consciously stand face to face with them, could conceive of them, employ them and ascend in homage from them to the Divine Lawgiver. In him all these pre-existing laws were recapitulated, and others were superadded. He himself was a system of moral government. Not only was the grand process of the Divine disclosure to be continued in man and by him, but he was so constituted that to him the entire manifestation was to be made.—*J. Harris, D.D.*

6 Their uniform constancy.

[12702] The success of physical research depends upon the constancy of the laws of nature, and the constancy of the laws of nature is revealed by the perfect uniformity of the behaviour of natural forces, under every possible trial to which they can be subjected. Although the most obvious characteristic of the world in which we live is unceasing change, so that every creature is in a constant state of growth or decay, and not two events ever take place which are in every particular exactly alike; yet we believe that amidst this ever-shifting scene there is neither chance nor caprice, but that every atom and every agent has its own law of action, and will never deviate a hair's-breadth from the will of the Divine Creator. The whole creation thus becomes a true witness for God. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." "He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: and his word runneth very swiftly." "Fire and hail; snow and vapours, stormy wind fulfilling his word." It is this uniformity of the course of nature, this regulation of the behaviour of natural agents by fixed laws, that constitutes the ground of induction, and is our warrant for trusting in the generalizations and inferences which we derive from past experience.—*Percy Strutt, M.A.*

[12703] If we could not absolutely rely on the steady, unvarying laws of nature, no knowledge could be attained, no triumphs won. The world would have been, not a cosmos, but a chaos. It would have been to mankind an intolerable source of terror and perplexity to live under the reign of the exceptional. But, as it is, Nature seems to welcome those triumphs over her which are won by obedience to her laws. The sea, it has been said, drowns ship and sailor; but trim your barque, and the wave which would drown it is cleft by it, and carries it along like its own foam, a plume and a power. What has sped man so swiftly and so far about the world? Merely his use of the simple observation that steam expands. What has enabled him to seize the lightning by the wing, and make it flash his thoughts for him round the girdled globe? Merely his observation of the conduct of electricity. How are the multitudinous needs of our cities supplied in every house? Merely by relying on the certainty that water finds its level. Take the very latest discoveries of science. We hear with admiration that the telephone can convey the very tones of our voices to ears a hundred miles away; and that by the phonograph a message can be carried to the antipodes. Whence came these achievements of yesterday? From applying the simple unvarying fact that speech is nothing more or less than the vibrations of articulated air. If man, to his own comfort and advantage, has gained from the universe an almost illimitable power, is not that power due simply and solely to the uniformity of law?—*Archdeacon Farrar.*

[12704] If nature should intermit her course, and leave altogether, though it were but for a while, the observation of her own laws—if those principal and mother elements, whereof all things in this lower world are made, should lose the qualities which they now have—if the frame of that heavenly arch erected over our heads should loose and dissolve itself—if celestial spheres should forget their wonted motions, and, by irregular volubility, turn themselves any way as it might happen— if the prince of the lights of heaven, which now as a giant doth run his unwearied course, should, as it were, through a languishing faintness, begin to stand and to rest himself—if the moon should wander from her beaten way—the times and seasons blend themselves by disordered and confused mixture, the winds breathe out their last gasp, the clouds yield no rain, the earth be defeated of heavenly influence, the fruits of the earth pine away as children at the withered breast of their mother, no longer able to yield them relief—what would become of man himself, whom these things do now all serve?—*Hooker.*

[12705] The apparent indifference of nature is a direct source of momentous blessing. Would we have it otherwise? Would we have the world governed by arbitrary interferences?

"Shall burning Etna, if a sage requires,
Forget to thunder, or recall her fires?
When the loose mountain trembles from on high,
Shall gravitation cease if you go by?"
—*Archdeacon Farrar.*

[12706] So far as the management of the material universe is concerned, God has declared unmistakably that He has no favourites. He has given to material forces a law which cannot be broken. His sun shines on the evil and on the good, and His rain falls on the just and on the unjust. The great blessings of life come to us all alike. The cradle, and the mother's tenderness, and the mirth of boyhood, and the lover's joy, and old age, and the smile of children, and night and day, and seed-time, and harvest, and summer, and winter, are for the

poor man quite as much as for the king. And we shall all be equal at the last—all classed according to life's natural ranks, fathers, sons, brothers, friends—not rich, nor wise, nor noble. There is in nature nothing provisional, nothing provincial. "The sun," says a wise writer, "smiles equally over Arctic wastes and over teeming cities, and glances alike from the sword of an Attila and from the crucifix of a Xavier." What science calls the uniformity of nature, faith accepts as the fidelity of God. It is thus that He disciplines us through obedience and patience, and rebukes the wild sophistry of temptation by irremediable decrees. We trust Him more because there is no devilish element in nature, no wild impulse rushing, with eruptions of curse and blessing, into space. And when we thus see nature making such superb provision for our joy in all the lavish prodigality of her manifold mysteries; when we see her steadily warning us against the causes of our misery and our degradation; when we see her rebuking, by her magnificent indifference, the petulances of our sorrow and the faithlessness of our despair; when we see her granting to us a splendid dominion over her elements by faithful obedience to her laws; when we see her constantly educing good out of evil; then we are glad and not angry that her steps are measured, her exceptions rare, her laws unchangeable.—*Ibid.*

7 Rules by which the forces of nature act.

[12707] We cannot think of them otherwise than as prescribed, as ordained to the end that these forces may work out their effects. In other words, the order of nature is an arrangement of intelligence. This accounts for the joy that springs up in the mind on the discovery of some great law which gives simplicity to the seemingly complex operations of nature. The mind recognizes something akin to itself. It recognizes a thought of God. The norms according to which the knowing faculty discriminates, connects, and classifies the objects in nature, imply that Nature herself has been prearranged according to the same norms, or is the product of mind.—*G. P. Fisher, D.D.*

8 Man's duty with reference to them.

[12708] The laws of nature are the established and inflexible conditions under which all God's creatures are ready to serve us. We may trust them, but cannot change them by a hair's breadth. In proportion as we learn their true nature, we obtain power over them. To be ignorant of them, or consciously to oppose them, is to be out of the Divine order, and to incur the penalty of ignorance or wilful disobedience. The idea of a Divine covenant in the outward world frequently occurs in the writings of the prophets, although it is only in recent times that it has become familiar to ordinary men. The prophet Jeremiah recurs to it again and again; as, for example, when he speaks of God's "covenant of the day and covenant of the night," and of "the appointed ordinances of heaven and earth," and of "the ordinances of the moon and stars"—or, as we now say, the laws of nature—as the pledge of that higher covenant, which determines the regulation and growth of the free spiritual life of moral agents under the kingdom of Christ as the Son of David.—*Percy Strutt, M.A.*

9 The difference between natural and moral law.

(1) *The laws of man's moral faculties may be dependent, in an inferior sense, on a concurrent organism, but they rise to an infinitely higher region.*

[12709] The laws of the emotions are as well established as those of the material universe; as, for instance, the law that feeling depends on a previous idea or conception of good or evil. These are laws as certainly and definitely established as the law of gravitation or of chemical affinity or vital assimilation. But these are not laws of body, of motion, or of molecules, or electricity, or magnetism, or vital absorption, but differ from them as widely as we can conceive one thing to differ from another.—*J. McCosh, D.D.*

[12710] If God's perfect law of human nature were written on the human will as the law of gravitation is written on every particle of matter, then it would be possible to determine beforehand what our behaviour would be in all the possible combinations and relations into which we could at any time be brought with the millions of our fellow-men: and the uniformity of that behaviour would be as uniform as the law itself. But man is, within certain limits, a free agent. He is able to sin and do what God forbids him to do, and so to violate the special law of his highest nature. The Divine law cannot always be read in his character and conduct. The actual facts of his life too often reveal the will of man in rebellion against God. Human history is, in consequence, a mixed revelation of Divine and human agency, often in a state of antagonism. So far from human life expressing the true law of humanity, it too often expresses the penalty of broken law; or, if the word law is now taken in its secondary sense of uniform sequence, it expresses the prevalence of "the law of sin and death;" just as living beings become subject to chemical decomposition when the vital energy is extinct—the lower law invariably coming into operation as soon as the higher law is suspended.—*Percy Strutt, M.A.*

10 The indisputable and peculiar right of God to the government of the world.

[12711] None ever questioned God's right; no, nor His act, but those that were swelled with an unreasonable ambition, such as Nebuchadnezzar, who for this cause underwent the punishment of a seven years' banishment from the society of men. None, indeed, that acknowledge a God did or can question God's right, though they may question His will and actual exercise of His right. He is the Creator, and

therefore is the Sovereign Lord and Ruler. The world is His family, and as a Master He hath an undoubted right to govern His own family; He gave all creatures their beings, and therefore hath a right to enact their laws, appoint their stations, and affix their ends. It is as much His property and prerogative to rule as it is to create.—*Charnock.*

[12712] There are certain philosophers who are ever talking of the laws of nature, as if they could accomplish all that we see in the earth and heavens without the necessity of calling in any Divine skill to arrange them. We have sometimes thought that it might be an appropriate punishment to deal with such persons as Jupiter did with those who complained to him of the way in which he regulated the weather. We would give the philosophers referred to a world of their own, with all the substances of nature, and their properties labelled upon them, and arranged according to human science, much like the articles in a museum or an apothecary's shop. We would place the mineralogist over the metals, the anatomist over the animals, and the botanist over the vegetable substances; we would give the meteorologist charge of the atmosphere and rain, and we would furnish the astronomer with those nebulæ out of which it is supposed that stars are formed, as webs are formed out of fleeces of wool. Having called these philosophers together in cabinet council, we would there commit to them these *principia* of worlds. Taking care to retire to a respectful distance for safety, it might be curious to listen to their disputes with one another; and then, when they had arranged their plans of operation, to find the chemist blown up by his own gases, the mineralogist sinking in the excavations which he had made, the anatomist groaning under disease, the botanist pining for hunger, the weather-regulator deluged with his own rain, and the astronomer driven ten thousand leagues into space by the recalcitration of some refractory planet. We may be sure that these philosophers would be the first to beg of Him who is the Disposer as well as the Creator of all things, to resume the government of His own world.—*J. McCosh, D.D.*

[12713] Though God has made man a free agent, yet we must not think that He has made such a creature as He Himself can't govern. No man doubts but that God can when He pleases, by an irresistible power, turn men's hearts, and chain up their passions, and alter their counsels; the only question is, when it is fit for God to do this: and no man can question the fitness of it, when the good government of the world requires it. God makes no man good or bad, virtuous or vicious, by a perpetual and irresistible force; for this contradicts the nature of virtue and vice, which requires a freedom and liberty of choice; but God may by a secret and irresistible influence upon men's minds even force them to do that good which they have no inclination to do, and restrain them from doing that evil which otherwise they would have done, which does not make them good men, but makes them the instruments of Providence in doing good to men; and God, who is the Sovereign Lord of all creatures, may, when He sees fit, press those men, if I may so speak, to His service, who would not do good upon choice. This shows the difference between the government of grace and Providence; the first has relation to virtue and vice, to make men good, to change their natures and sinful inclinations into habits of virtue, and therefore admits of no greater force than what is consistent with the freedom of choice, and the nature of virtue and vice; but the government of Providence respects the external happiness or misery, rewards or punishments, of men or nations.—*Dean Sherlock.*

XVII. The World of Spirits Generally.

1 History of the doctrine as to a world of spirits.

[12714] We see repeatedly, in earlier and later periods of the history of revelation, ministering spirits from heaven appearing for the guidance, protection, or consolation of the pious, or for the punishment of the ungodly. They are represented as composing a sort of heavenly court, unceasingly active in glorifying God's name and accomplishing His will. Although not of spotless purity in the sight of the Holy One (Job xv. 15), they are, however, regarded as far superior to man in moral excellency, as well as in wisdom and power. Especially in and after the Babylonian captivity we find the angelology in many respects developed. Guardian angels mentioned by name appear in Daniel and Zechariah on behalf of different lands and persons. In the days of the New Testament we see their existence generally acknowledged, but denied by the Sadducees, and maintained and brought constantly into the foreground by the Lord and His apostles. Appearances of angels we find related in the history of the birth of John and of Jesus, in the desert of the Temptation and in Gethsemane, in connection with the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and at remarkable moments in the life of His apostles (Acts v. 19, viii. 26, x. 3, xii. 7, xxvii. 23). Especially do we see the Lord frequently and with manifest satisfaction dwelling on the subject of these friendly and radiant forms, and directing His apostles thereto. Angels are, according to His teaching, personal, immaterial, sinless, immortal beings (Matt. xxii. 30), countless (Matt. xxvi. 53), and placed in the closest relation, not simply to the individual man (Matt. xviii. 10; Luke xv. 10, xvi. 22), but also to that whole kingdom, at the future revelation and triumph of which they are called to fulfil a highly important task (Matt. xiii. 39, xxv. 31). Paul also has not a little that is remarkable to say of them (1 Cor. vi. 3, xi. 10; Gal. iii. 19; Eph. iii. 10); and while Peter also speaks of them as subjects of the glorified Christ (1 Pet. iii. 22), they ap-

pear repeatedly in the Apocalypse before the age of ecstatic John. Only Nehemiah, Esther, and the Epistles of John and James are entirely silent with regard to them. — *Van Oosterzee* (*condensed*).

[12715] The Jewish notions on this subject after the captivity were strongly coloured by Babylonian and Persian traditions. Some later writers, as Philo, thought of the angels as Divine powers, related to God as rays to the sun. Others, especially the Talmudists and Cabbalistic Rabbins, developed a very elaborate angelic hierarchy. The early Christians assumed their existence as a matter of course, and the orthodox fathers against the Gnostics, who regarded them as Divine emanations, insisted that they were created beings (Justin, 165; Irenæus, 202). About their nature opinions differed. Justin and Tertullian (220) assigned to them ethereal bodies; Clement of Alexandria (220) regarded them as incorporeal; Origen (254) confesses his ignorance. As to their offices various speculations prevailed; various fathers assigning them subordinate functions in Divine government. No father but Justin, and he is ambiguous, gives the slightest sanction to their worship. From the fourth century the doctrine becomes increasingly definite. It was disputed whether they were capable of sinning. Cyril of Jerusalem (386) thought this was so, and that they needed pardon; Augustine (430), that they *had been* in danger of falling, but that they were now confirmed in immutable holiness. Nazianzen thought them to have been created before the rest of the universe; Augustine, on the first day. About the sixth century the apocryphal treatise ascribed to Dionysius formulated an angelic hierarchy of nine orders. Fulgentius of Ruspè (533) affirmed that they were composed of body and spirit. During this period their worship became popular, although forbidden by a synod of Laodicea (364), and discouraged by Augustine (430), Theodoret (456), and Pope Gregory I. (604), it was sanctioned by Ambrose (397), and received a great impulse from the practice of dedicating churches to them. Towards the Middle Ages stories of angelic apparitions give rise eventually to the festival of St Michael and All Angels. At the fourth Lateran Council (1215) the purely spiritual nature of angels was laid down as an article of faith. The schoolmen indulged in innumerable discussions about their powers, faculties, and capacities, some of which have much poetic beauty, but others are wildly absurd. Belief in guardian angels was almost universal, and found sanction in the authorized service-books of the Church. At the Reformation the worship of angels was abandoned as unscriptural, and as a natural consequence speculations became of less moment and gradually ceased. In the Protestant confessions we have only passing allusions to their existence, while Rationalism ignores it altogether, resolving them into myth or poetry. Swedenborg (1772), however, held that angels are the glorified spirits of righteous men.—*T. G. Crippen* (*condensed*).

2 Its practical importance.

[12716] The religious and theological importance of angelology has been denied without justice. It is true that it is of no such fundamental importance as the Incarnation and Resurrection. Yet it renders more clear our conception of the all-surpassing majesty of God, of the Divine greatness of our Lord, and the glory of His last appearing. Certainly it may be, as it has been, abused to the ends of superstition. But restricted within proper limits the recognition of this truth has an exceedingly practical bearing. It raises man by reminding him of his exalted rank (Psa. viii. 5) and his high destiny (Matt. xxii. 30). It shames the science by asserting to him the possibility of a normal development of spiritual beings, but at the same time by showing to him their interest in his conversion. It directs the Christian to a lofty source of consolation (Psa. xci. 11, 12), an excellent example (Matt. vi. 10), and a heart-cheering perspective (Heb. xii. 22). The life of the Church and of the heart would certainly be in no worse position if the suggestive hint of Calvin were taken to heart: "*In omni conventu sacro sentimus nos in conspectu Dei et angelorum.*"—*Van Oosterzee.*

3 Its reasonable inferences.

[12717] Does it not philosophically appear a somewhat violent assumption to decide that man is really the highest being in the created universe, or at least that between man and his Maker there are no gradations with different moral colourings of intermediate life? Would it not be rather reasonable to suppose that the graduated series of living beings, graduated as it is so delicately, which we trace from the lowest zoophyte up to man, does not stop abruptly with man, that it continues beyond, although we may be unable to follow the invisible step of the continuing ascent? Surely, I submit, the reasonable probability would incline this way, and revelation does but confirm and reveal these anticipations when it discovers to faith, on the one hand, the hierarchies of the blessed angels, and on the other, as in this passage of Scripture, the corresponding gradations of evil spirits, principalities, and powers who have abused their freedom, and who are ceaselessly labouring to impair and to destroy the true moral order of the universe. These spiritual beings, good and evil, act upon humanity as certainly, as constantly, as man himself acts upon the lower creatures around him, and thus it is that we "wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."—*Canon Liddon.*

[12718] It is beyond the province of reason to determine for or against their existence. They do not develop themselves to our senses;

their existence is not necessary. Consequently we can know nothing certain regarding them unless it is revealed to us. Plainly our reason cannot decide *against* their existence; for all our arguments must be drawn from analogy. But we find a continued gradation of being from man *downward*, and what forbids our applying the analogy in the other direction?—*Moses Stuart.*

4 Its leading deductions.

(1) *The world of spirits is not another place, but another state of being.*

[12719] The world of spirits is not, as many think, at a great distance from us, in other regions of the universe: it is wherever the material world is; we are in the midst of it. We are separated from it only by the gross matter with which we are now united; and when we shall be divested of these bodies we shall be in another world, without being in another place. We shall then perceive objects of which we can now have no perception, because our senses are not adapted to them. The material world also will be to us a wholly different thing from what it is; inasmuch as its impressions will be made upon wholly different organs. It may be presumed, there will then be no such ideas of extension, of solidity, of space, &c., as we now have; nor shall we receive either pleasure or pain from the same objects which produce them now. In a word, we shall be as the angels of God, and the world will be to us what it now is to them. We are now in the presence of God, and of Christ, and of angels; and we shall see them as soon as we shall have passed through our coming change. Of this truth Jesus gave intimations to His disciples, when He appeared to them, and disappeared, without locomotion, and knew what they had spoken in His absence; when He told them, "Wherever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them;" and when He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."—*Lewis Mayer, D.D.*

(2) *Man lives in the midst of an invisible as well as visible world.*

[12720] With the invisible world, the spiritual as well as the sentient, we may have numerous relations and points of connection—we with them, and they with us, as parts of one great and connected system, embracing that portion of eternity and infinity which we call time and space.—*J. McCosh, D.D.*

[12721] It is not only no proof of, but it does not even afford a presumption of the non-existence of spirits, and of their not being about us, that we do not actually see them. The stars are fully as existent in the daytime as at night, although it is during the night alone that they are visible to us, and even only then when clouds do not intercept the view of them. So also spirits may be ever about us, and would be at once perceptible to us, were we not enveloped in the cloud of matter, and their presence obscured by the glare of terrestrial objects, by which we are surrounded.—*Geo. Harris.*

5 St. Paul's marked discernment of the unseen.

[12722] Behind all that met the eye in daily life St. Paul discovers another world that did not meet the eye, but which was, for him at least, equally real. Behind all the social tranquility, all the order, all the enjoyment of life, all the widening intercourse between races and classes, all the maintenance of law, with a fair amount of municipal and personal liberty which distinguished undoubtedly the Imperial *régime*, considered as a whole; behind the tribunals of those magistrates, behind the chairs of those philosophers, behind the stately official ceremonies and the rude popular festivities, behind the fleets which swept the Mediterranean, and the legions which guarded the frontiers on the Danube and the Euphrates, behind all that spoke and acted in this vast and most imposing system, behind all its seeming stability and all its progress, St. Paul discerned other forms hovering, guiding, marshalling, arranging, inspiring that which met the eye.

6 Heathen conceptions of spiritual beings.

[12723] The religious philosophy of every age in the Gentile world has taught the existence of a class of beings between the supreme Deity and man. In the theology of all idolatrous nations, as there was a plurality of divinities to whom their worship was addressed, so there was a subordination of rank among the objects of worship, and one supreme Deity that presided over the rest; and among the inferior gods there were such as approached very near to man, while others scarcely differed from the one who was acknowledged as supreme. But besides these inferior beings, to whom the title "gods" was given, the Gentiles held the existence of a class of beings between the gods and men, consisting of different orders, who were the ministers of the gods, and mediators between them and men; bearing to the gods the prayers and offerings of men; and to men the answers and the commands of the gods. The Hindoos have their Dejotas, the Persians, and others of the Magian sect, their Amschashpands, Izeds, Fervers, and Dews; the Greeks had their Dæmons, and the Romans their Genii. Hesiod, who lived about the time of Homer, divides intelligent natures into four classes, namely, gods, dæmons, heroes, and men. For so doing he is commended by Plutarch. Plato taught that the whole space between the gods and men was occupied by dæmons, which were, however, of different kinds. The Pythagoreans, the Stoics, the Peripatetics, and, indeed, every sect of philosophy among the Gentiles, except the Epicurean, held a similar doctrine.—*Lewis Mayer, D.D.*

XVIII. The Angelic Host.

1 Import of the study as to angelic beings.

[12724] It will hardly be denied that the mass of Christians think little, if at all, of angels; that they regard them as beings so far removed from companionship with ourselves, that discourse on their nature and occupation must deserve the character of unprofitable speculation. If, then, the preacher take as his theme the burning spirits which surround God's throne, he will probably considered as adventuring upon mysteries too high for research, whilst there is abundance of more practical topics on which he might enlarge.

Yet it cannot have been intended that we should thus remain ignorant of angels: it cannot be true that there is nothing to be ascertained in regard of these creatures, or nothing which it is for our instruction or our comfort to know. There is a petition in the Lord's Prayer which should teach us better than this—"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." It must be specially by angels that God's will is done in heaven; and if we are directed to take the manner, or degree, in which angels do God's will, as measuring that in which we should desire its being done by men, surely it can neither be beyond our power to know anything of angels, nor unimportant that we study to be wise up to what is written regarding them in the Bible. And, indeed, so far is Scripture from leaving angelic ministrations amongst obscure or inscrutable things, that it interweaves it with the most encouraging of its promises, and thus strives, as it were, to force it upon us as a practical and personal truth. Where is the Christian who has not been gladdened by the words, "Because thou hast made the Lord . . . thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee"? But how few give attention to the following verse, though evidently explanatory of the agency through which the promise shall be accomplished: "For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways"!

And it ought not to be overlooked, that, in proportion as we lose sight of the doctrine, that good angels are "ministering spirits," influencing us for righteousness, we are likely to forget the power of our great "adversary, the devil," who, with the hosts under his guidance, continually labours at effecting our destruction. It can hardly be that they, who are keenly alive to their exposure to the assaults of malignant but invisible enemies, should be indifferent to the fact of their having on their side the armies of heaven: good and evil spirits must be considered as antagonists in a struggle for ascendency over man; and there is, therefore, more than a likelihood that they who think little of their friends in so high a contest will depreciate their foes, and thus more than ever expose themselves to their power.—*H. Melvill, B.D.*

2 The nature and properties of good angels.

[12725] The angels are spirits, πνεύματα (Heb. i. 14). This term expresses, first, something positive, and second, something negative concerning the nature or being of the angels.

The idea of spirituality is the positive phase of this term. According to it, the angels are free personalities, endowed with self-consciousness, in opposition to the mere offspring of nature, incapable of freedom and without personality.

The whole Biblical view respecting these beings conforms to this designation of them as spirits, from the most essential peculiarities of their being. They never appear as mere forces of nature, or as unconscious, cosmical life-potencies, although they are, indeed, often revealed as media or bearers of the same. Compare John v. 4. No, they ever appear as free beings, endowed with consciousness and possessed of an independent spiritual existence, whose will is never constrained to accord with the will and designs of their Creator, but is left to choose and decide for itself.

The negative phase of the term "spirits," by which the angels in general are designated, does not force us to deny all idea of body (σωμα) in connection with the angels, for there are also spiritual bodies; but merely the idea of a body other than spiritual—a fleshly body, compounded of earthy materials (σωμα ψυχικόν, σάρξ). "It excludes"—to use the words of an esteemed divine—"it excludes all idea of a life connected with flesh and blood derived from earthly materials, all idea of a form of life holding the same confined relations to place and space as does our gross organism, all idea of dependence upon conditions of life and laws of movement such as we have to do with, without at all denying that the angels have proper bodies, and an outward life conformable to the nature of those bodies. For the Scriptures reveal to us a sphere of corporeal life, in addition to and beyond our own as it at present subsists, and which, just as our present life with its 'tabernacle of clay,' its gross earthly character, corresponds to our terrestrial system, in like manner, as a faithful transcript of the celestial systems, is adapted to the nature of a pure spirit πνεῦμα, just as further, our present body is adapted to the nature of a mere ψυχή."—*Kurtz.*

[12726] According to the intimations which Scripture and ecclesiastical teaching afford us respecting the nature and essence of angels, we must represent them to our minds as pure spirits, and not, like men, attached to bodies and limited by the conditions of space. Their home is heaven, but not heaven in the astronomical meaning of the expression, but rather heaven in the intellectual and spiritual sense. If, on the one hand, they are entirely unshackled by the conditions of space, just as little, on the other, are they subjected to the conditions of time. An angel cannot become old. Youth and age are antitheses which have no meaning as applied to them. Although they have an origin, and indeed may be said to have a history in so far as a falling off from God has taken

place in the angel-world, yet have they no history in the sense of a continuous development, a continuous progress and advance to a state of maturity. For from the beginning of their existence the angels have ranged themselves either on the side of God or against Him, and it is only in so far as they enter into the world of mankind that they have any part in a progressive history.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[12727] That we must suppose them—namely, the angels—created, each of them, in perfect maturity, unto which we, our first parents excepted, grow up gradually and by slow degrees. *They* had their intellectual ability fit for present exercise when they first existed, and did all then at once co-exist—as we generally reckon, having nothing to induce us to think otherwise; *we* come into being successively, and exist here but in a succession.—*J. Howe.*

3 Their rank and order.

[12728] In ordinary language we comprise all these beings under the name of angels, but we know not wherein consists their higher nature, nor do we know the number of grades which there may be between the least perfect angel, who is nearest akin to the most perfect man, and the most glorious of created beings, who enjoy unutterable bliss, feeling themselves in close proximity to God.—*H. Schokke, D.D.*

[12729] Rom. viii. 38; Eph. i. 21, vi. 12; Col. i. 16, and some other places of Scripture, do seem to give this kind of overture, viz., that there are several ranks and orders of angels, and it is not much improbable but that there is a subordination amongst them, and that some are of a superior order and some of an inferior; and that every rank hath one that is the principal or superintendent over the rest of the same rank, though this be but conjectural too. We read, indeed, of archangels, 1 Thess. iv. 16; Jude 9. In this latter place the archangel spoken of is called by his proper name, Michael, which rather imparts a species or order of such angels, than that there is only one archangel, and his name Michael; for if there had been but one archangel, it had been more proper to have said *the archangel*, without calling him by his proper name, which ordinarily serveth to distinguish one person from another of the same species; and (Dan. x. 13) Michael is called one of the chief princes, which imparteth there are more of the same order, *i.e.*, one of the archangels, though perhaps the first of them, as the margin gives you the liberty of reading it. Though for good order they have one that doth precede or go before, yet that there should be any one that should have the sovereign power or rule and ordering of all the rest of all ranks and orders, is contrary to reason, and hath no footing in Scripture.—*John Goodwin*, 1633–1655.

[12730] The creatures that God hath ordained in their several ranks, they are not for any defect in God to supply His want of power, but further to enlarge and demonstrate His goodness. He is the "Lord of Hosts," therefore He will have hosts of creatures, one under another, and all serviceable to His end. His end is to bring a company to salvation, to a supernatural end, to happiness in the world to come; and He being Lord of all, He makes all to serve for that end. He could do it of Himself; but having ordained such ranks of creatures, He makes all to serve for that end, for the manifestation of His power and of His goodness, not for any defect of strength in Himself. He could do all by Himself. He could have been content with His own happiness, and never have made a world; but He made the world to show His goodness and love and respect for mankind. So he will have angels attend us though He watch over us by His own providence. This takes away not any care of His, but He shows His care in the attendance of angels and other creatures. He useth them to convey His care and love to us.—*R. Sibbes, D.D.*, 1577–1635.

[12731] There are different names applied to them—cherubim, seraphim, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers. It is profitless, however, to attempt to delineate the grades of precedence which they occupy. It is not right to speak of angels and archangels; for there is only one archangel mentioned in the Bible. He was the Michael who contended with Satan about the body of Moses. There is no other personage mentioned with that rank or that title.—*Rev. C. Robinson, D.D.*

4 Their office and ministry.

(1) *Nature of their ministry.*

a. The employments of the good angels are partly contemplative and partly active.

[12732] They are represented as surrounding the throne of God, and singing His praises (Psa. ciii. 20; Isa. vi. 3; Rev. v. 11); and also as ministering spirits (in what manner is not declared) to the heirs of salvation (Heb. i. 14). On all important occasions in the history of redemption, angels appear on the scene; at the giving of the Mosaic law (Acts vii. 53), at the birth of Christ (Luke ii. 13), at His second coming (Matt. xxv. 31), and at the gathering in of His elect (Ibid. xiii. 41). They share in the joy of the Redeemer over repentant sinners (Luke xv. 10); they are present in the assemblies of Christians (1 Cor. xi. 10); they convey the souls of the pious departed to their rest (Luke xvi. 22). Though not interested in them as man is, they make the mysteries of redemption their earnest study (1 Pet. i. 12). That a guardian angel is assigned to each believer is a pious opinion which may derive some support from our Lord's words (Matt. xviii. 10); but whatever hints Scripture may furnish on this subject, it gives no prominence thereto, nor does it ever encourage us to look to angels for guidance or help in the emergencies of life. Why should it, when the Christian has a right

to rely upon His overruling providence and ever-present succour, whom the angels themselves worship as their Creator? That the subject of angelic agency is wholly without dogmatical import for us is too much to say; but that it may be abused to superstitious practices Scripture itself intimates (Col. ii. 18), and experience proves.—*E. A. Litton.*

(2) *Their chief official functions.*

a. To serve in the courts of heaven.

[12733] They are called the chariots of God: the chariots of God are thousands of angels. That is, they are the chariots of His will, they bear His will about to every part of the universe. This is their delight. They bless God, who vouchsafes thus to employ them. But when they have fulfilled God's message, then they return back to Him by whom they were sent forth. They return back to Him, and stand before Him, drinking in fresh streams of life, and strength, and purity, and joy from His presence.—*Hare.*

[12734] What philosophy calls ideas, and mythology calls gods, receive in revelation the name of angels; but it is the peculiar characteristic of the angels to be ever active for the kingdom of God. Ideas, the divinities of life, operate as angels then, and then only, when their tendency is, not in the direction of the kingdom of this world, but in that of the kingdom of God, as their main object—when they are mediators for the kingdom of holiness.—*Bp. Martensen.*

b. To minister to the Church on earth.

[12735] The same love that made the angels to serve Christ makes them also to serve the Church for His sake; and whilst they love Him, they cannot but love her, as related to Him, and also to themselves as fellow-members.—*Thos. Horton, D.D.*, 1679.

c. To become ambassadors extraordinary from God to man.

[12736] Their other employment is immediately to execute God's commands about the government of the world; they are the great ministers of providence, and it is their glory so to be; their service is their privilege; as in the courts of princes every attendant is honourable, or at least thinks himself so. The angels are still despatched by God upon all His great messages to the world; and therefore their very name in Greek, which is ἄγγελος, signifies a messenger. In short, they have the most illustrious employment that can be, which is to be ambassadors extraordinary from the King of kings.—*R. South, D.D.*, 1633–1716.

d. To become the instruments of Divine vengeance.

[12737] They were employed as the instruments of judgment upon the enemies of God (2 Kings xix. 35; Acts xii. 23); they will officiate in the final judgment in separating the good from the bad, in gathering the elect, and in bearing them up to meet the Lord.—*Dr. A. A. Hodge*, 1863.

e. To attend on and succour the heirs of salvation.

[12738] What is their ministry and custody? It is not *cura animarum*—care and charge of souls; that Christ taketh upon Himself, and performeth it by His Spirit; but *ministerium externi auxilii*—to afford us outward help and relief; it is *custodia corporis*—they guard the bodily life chiefly. Thus we find them often employed. An angel brought Elijah his food under the juniper tree. An angel stirred the pool of Siloam. An angel was the guide of the way to Abraham's servant. Angels defend us against enemies, Psa. xxxiv. 7; 2 Kings xix. 35. An angel opened the prison doors to the apostles, Acts v. 19, xii. 7.—*T. Manton, D.D.*, 1620–1677.

[12739] How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
To come to succour us that succour want!
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The fluttering skies, like flying pursuivant,
Against foul fiends to aid us militant!
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
And light squadrons round about us plant,
And all for love, and nothing for reward;
Oh, why should heavenly God to man have such regard?—*Edmund Spenser.*

[12740] 1. He giveth those blessed spirits which behold His face charge concerning His people upon earth; as if a nobleman were charged to look to a beggar by a prince of both. 2. We understand the operation of finite spirits better than infinite. God is so far out of the reach of our commerce that we cannot understand the particularity of His providence. 3. To counterwork the devil; evil angels are ready to hurt us, and therefore good angels are ready to preserve us. Well might the devil be so versed in this place (Matt. iv. 5, 6); he hath often felt the effects of it; he knew it by experience, being so often encountered by the good angels in his endeavours against the people of God. 4. To begin our acquaintance, which in heaven shall be perfected (Heb. xii. 22).—*T. Manton, D.D.*, 1620–1677.

[12741] What variety is here of your assistance! One while, ye lead us in our way, as ye did Israel; another while, ye instruct us, as ye did Daniel: one while, ye fight for us, as ye did for Joshua; another while, ye purvey for us, as for Elijah: one while, ye fit us to one holy vocation, as ye did to Isaiah; another while, ye dispose of the opportunities of our calling for good, as ye did of Philip's to the Eunuch: one while, ye foretell our danger, as to Lot, to Joseph and Mary; another while, ye comfort our affliction, as to Hagar; one while, ye oppose evil projects against us, as to Balaam; another while, ye will be striven with for a blessing, as with Jacob: one while, ye resist our offensive

courses, as to Moses (Exod. iv.) ; another while, ye encourage us in our devotions, as ye did Paul and Silas and Cornelius : one while, ye deliver from durance, as Peter ; another while, ye preserve us from danger and death, as the Three Children : one while, ye are ready to restrain our presumption, as the cherub before the gate of Paradise ; another while, to excite our courage, as to Elijah and Theodosius: one while, to refresh and cheer us in our sufferings, as to the apostles ; another while, to prevent our sufferings, as to Jacob in the pursuit of Laban and Esau, to the sages in the pursuit of Herod : one while, ye cure our bodies, as at the pool of Bethesda : another while, ye carry up our souls to glory, as ye did to Lazarus. It were endless to instance in all the gracious offices which ye perform.—*Bp. Hall*, 1574–1656.

[12742] Texts of Scripture are often suddenly and mysteriously brought into the mind ; texts which have not perhaps recently engaged our attention, but which are most nicely suited to our circumstances, or which furnish most precisely the material then needed by our wants. There will enter into the spirit of a Christian, on whom has fallen some unexpected temptation, a passage of the Bible which is just as a weapon wherewith to foil his assailant ; or if it be an unlooked-for difficulty into which he is plunged, the occurring verses will be those best adapted for counsel and guidance ; or if it be some fearful trouble with which he is visited, then will there pass through all the chambers of the soul gracious declarations, which the inspired writers will seem to have uttered and registered on purpose for himself. But let him ask himself whether he is not, on the other hand, often conscious of the intrusion into his soul of what is base and defiling? Whether, if he happen to have heard the jeer and the blasphemy, the parody on sacred things, or the insult upon moral, they will not be frequently recurring to his mind? recurring too at moments when there is least to provoke them, and when it has been most his endeavour to gather round him an atmosphere of what is sacred and pure? And we never scruple to give it as a matter of consolation to a Christian, that he may fully ascribe them to the agency of the devil. Now it is expressly said of the devil that he is "the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience," as though he not merely had access to their minds, but took up his abode there, that he might carry on, as in a citadel, the war and the stratagem. And if evil angels have such power over the thoughts of men for evil, it seems unreasonable to question that good angels have as great influence over them for good ; that they too work in the children of obedience, and are mainly instrumental in calling up and marshalling those solemn processions of sacred remembrances which pass, with silent tread, through the chambers of the spirit, and leave on them the impress of their pureness and power.—*H. Melvill, B.D.*

5 Their blessedness.

[12743] The blessedness of angels doth not consist in the endowments of their nature—that they are great in power, light, knowledge, and wisdom ; for notwithstanding these things, many of them became devils. But the excellency and blessedness of the angelical state consists in these two things : 1. That they are disposed, and able constantly, inseparably, universally, uninterruptedly, to cleave unto God in love. And as they do so unto God, so they do unto the person of Christ ; and through Him, as their Head, unto God, even the Father. 2. Add hereunto that gracious reflex sense which they have of the glory, dignity, eternal sweetness, and satisfaction, which arise from hence, and we have the sum of angelical blessedness. — *J. Owen, D.D.*, 1616–1683.

6 Their power and activity.

(1) *As displayed in their mighty subjugation of matter, and their rapid traversing of space.*

[12744] Corporeal matter is not the proper cause of action, but remains sluggish and unmoved, till it receives motion by the impulse of an immaterial principle : nor does any philosophy prove, nor indeed can prove, that anything that is merely body can move itself. So that the angelical essence, being free from any material mixture, is also free from all clogs and encumbrances. It is all pure action, and so must needs exert itself at a higher rate of force than any of those bodily agents that we see and converse with. Neither do the angels move by certain periods and steps of progression, as we are fain to do, who carry our own weights and hindrances about us ; but they measure the vastest spaces and the greatest distances in the twinkling of an eye, in a moment, in a portion of time so short, that it falls under no mortal perception or observation. And for this cause were the cherubims in the tabernacle painted with wings, the best way that we have to express the greatest agility by ; though the swiftness of an arrow out of a bow is no more to be compared to the speed of an angel than the motion of a snail can be compared to that.—*R. South, D.D.*, 1633–1716.

[12745] That angels have possessed power over matter and rendered material substances subservient to their ends is manifest from Scripture ; and there is no evidence whatever that any special energy was imparted to them by God on those occasions, or that He exerted His omnipotence when some words were uttered, or signs were given by them. For instance, we are not to suppose, when the angel rolled away the huge stone from the door of the sepulchre on the morning of the Saviour's resurrection, that the Divine Being exerted the energy requisite, and that the action was really done by Him, though it appeared to be performed by the heavenly messenger. The narration in this, and in similar instances, leads to the conclusion that the actions were performed by these celes-

tial spirits themselves. And how could it with any propriety be asserted of them, that they "excel in strength," if whole legions of them could not, by any inherent or natural power that they possess, and can exercise when they please, have effected that which a few puny mortals could easily have accomplished? which is certainly implied in the hypothesis which we are opposing; for the latter could have rolled away the stone, and the former could not; nay, would it not follow that all the angelic hosts of heaven could not move a pebble or a feather? Angels must have some means of discerning the forms and appearances of matter, of ascertaining its presence and extent, and some of its properties; or else how could the morning stars have sung, and the sons of God shouted for joy, when the foundations of the earth were laid? And how could they perform the services with which they are frequently charged, since these have a relation to matter? How could they minister to the saints, as we know from the Scriptures they frequently do?—*W. Scott.*

[12746] While Daniel was praying, the angel Gabriel descended from heaven and spoke to him. Gabriel is said to "stand in the presence of God." In that flight, then, he traversed the whole mighty interval between God's peculiar habitation and this world in a few minutes of time. It would take a person, at ordinary railroad speed, five hundred years to travel from our earth to the sun. But science has demonstrated that our planetary system is but a speck in the universe, a diminutive craft on the wide sea of space where countless fleets of worlds are sailing. Now, supposing the Divine throne to be fixed somewhere amid the innumerable suns and systems that crowd immensity, its distance from our globe assumes a magnitude which no figures can represent; and yet angels travel it in a trice! Satan possesses the same ability —the same celerity of transit; so that it is easy to understand how he may tempt us here, and in the same moment cross the Atlantic and effect the ruin of some soul in Asia. Yea, we wonder not that, with such powers of locomotion, and with legions of others like him at his command, he seems omnipresent.—*T. McRae.*

7 The difference between angels and men.

(1) *As regards nature and condition.*

[12747] That difference is radical. Angels were created as individuals, and although connected with others by a common nature, and placed in social relations with them, yet were not derived from any created being nor dependent on any, as a child must be on his parents. Men are created mediately—brought into being in a state of helpless infancy, committed in trust for years to parental care; dependent for life, and health, and comfort, on domestic aid; endowed with faculties which are slowly developed under the influence of instruction and example; and liable, therefore, to be largely influenced, for good or evil, by the condition and character of those with whom he is so necessarily and closely related.—*J. Buchanan, D.D. (condensed).*

[12748] They were created without sex. Christ Himself taught this in express terms as a characteristic peculiarity of the angels, when in reference to the glorified bodies of men at the resurrection He said: "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven" (Matt. xxii. 30). As a first consequence it was absolutely necessary that the number of the angels should ever remain just such as God constituted it—the number could neither be increased nor diminished in any other way than by a direct act on the part of God—and that so significant a provision as obtains upon earth, and one which conditions and moulds all human history, namely, that man was to unfold himself through the institution of marriage from his original unity into a great multitude, should never obtain in the angelic world. A further consequence was, that the bond which connects the single individual to the whole species, could not, as in the case of man, be a bond of succession, sustained by the unity of derivation, but merely one of simultaneity, conditioned and preserved by their all having the same Creator, a community of nature, of objects to be gained, and of destinies to be fulfilled. So far as their self-determination and the history flowing from it were concerned, this provision was specially and peculiarly important, since it rendered the choice of one part of the species, or of one individual, independent of the choice of all the rest, so that the fall of one could not carry with it the ruin of the whole species.—*Kurtz.*

[12749] As to our nature, our immortal souls are kin, or like unto the angels, though our bodies are but like the brutes. Those souls that are created after the image of God, in their very natural essence (as rational and free agents) besides His moral image of sanctity, may well be said to be like the angels: "He made us a little lower than the angels." And God hath made us their charge and care; and therefore no doubt hath given them a special love unto us, to fit them to the due performance of their trust. As ministers have a special paternal love to their flocks, and as Christians are to have a special love to one another to enable and engage them to the duties appointed them by God towards each other, so these excellent spirits have no doubt a far purer and greater love, to the image of God upon the saints, and to the saints for the image and sake of God, than the dearest friends and holiest persons on earth can have. For they are more holy, and they are more perfectly conformed to the mind of God, and they love God Himself more perfectly than we, and therefore are more to be loved by us than any mortals are, both because they are more excellent, pure, and amiable, and because they have more love to us. Moreover the angels are servants of the same God and members of the same society which we belong

to. They are the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, of which we are heirs; they have possession, and we have title, and shall in time possess it. We are called to much of the same employment with them; we must love the same God, and glorify Him by obedience, thanks, and praise, and so do they; therefore they are ministers for our good, and rejoice in the success of their labours, as ministers of Christ on earth do. There is not a sinner converted but it is the angels' joy, which showeth how much they attend to that work. "We are come to Mount Zion" (Heb. xii. 22–24). They are especially present and attendant on us in our holy assemblies and services of God; and therefore we are admonished (1 Cor. xi. 10; Eccles. v. 6) to reverence their presence and do nothing before them that is sinful or unseemly. The presence of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, must continually awe us into exact obedience. With the Church, they pry into the mystery of the dispensation of the Spirit to the Church. And so "by the Church," that is, by God's dealings with the Church, is "made known the manifold wisdom of God" even to those "heavenly principalities and powers." In conclusion, Christ telleth us that in our state of blessedness we shall be "equal to the angels," and so shall live with them for ever.—*R. Baxter*, 1615–1691.

[12750] If we endeavour to determine the relation between the nature of angels and human nature with a somewhat greater degree of precision, it will be evident that in one respect the angels are higher than men, whereas in another they occupy an inferior position: higher, because they are powers and energies, the strong, the mighty ones, who execute the commandments of the Lord, elevated above all earthly limitations: inferior, because they bear the same relation to man as the universal to the microcosmical; for which reason they are also represented as spirits waiting and tending upon human life, as a firmament of stars ministering to the life of earth in its historical convulsions. Although the angel, in relation to man, is the more powerful spirit, man's spirit is nevertheless the richer and the more comprehensive. For the angel in all his power is only the expression of a single one of all those phases which man in the inward nature of his soul, and the richness of his own individuality, is intended to combine into a complete and perfect microcosm.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[12751] As there is an important property in animal life, which there is not in vegetables, and in rational beings, which is not in mere animals, so there may be in pure, spiritual existence some property or power, or at least a modification of a property or power, which there is not in a compound being like man, that will render the lowest order of the former vastly superior to the highest of the latter, especially while the soul is united to a gross mortal body, and that too, as ours is, deteriorated by sin.—*W. Scott.*

(2) *As regards law.*

[12752] The law as prescribed to angels was personal, and recognized only individual responsibility; for however they might be connected by social relations, or even subordinated in a hierarchical government, and however they might be influenced by each other's example, they were so far independent that each stood or fell for himself according to his own conduct. But the law, as prescribed to man, was generic, and recognized representative as well as individual responsibility; for while, as it was the law of man's moral nature, it required personal obedience on the part of every individual, yet as a revealed covenant of life it was imposed on Adam as the representative of his race, and made them dependent for good or evil on his conduct as their federal head.—*J. Buchanan, D.D.* (*condensed*).

8 Man's attitude towards the holy angels of God.

(1) *Should be that of loving reverence, but not homage.*

[12753] The good Lord forgive me, for that, amongst my other offences, I have suffered myself so much to forget as His Divine presence, so the presence of the holy angels. It is, I confess, my great sin that I have filled mine eyes with other objects; I have been slack in returning praises to my God for the continual assistance of those blessed and beneficent spirits which have ever graciously attended me, without intermission, from the first hour of my conception to this present moment; neither shall ever, I hope, absent themselves from my tutelage and protection till they shall have presented to my poor soul her final glory. Oh, that the dust and clay were so worked out of my eyes that I might behold, together with the presence, the numbers, the beauties, and the excellences of those my ever-present guardians!—*Bp. Hall*, 1574–1656.

[12754] We must learn this duty not to grieve these good spirits. As it is wondrous humility that they will stoop to be servants to us that are of a weaker, baser nature than they, so it is wondrous patience that they will continue still to guard us, notwithstanding we do that that grieves them: one motive to keep us in the way of obedience, that we do not grieve those blessed spirits that are our guard and attendance. Let us consider when we are alone—it would keep us from many sins—no eye of man seeth; ay, but God seeth, and conscience within seeth, and angels without are witnesses; they grieve at it, and the devils about us rejoice at it. These meditations, when we are solicited to sin, would withdraw our minds and take up our hearts, if we had a spirit of faith to believe these things. —*R. Sibbes*, 1577–1635.

[12755] Just as the Son of God is the primary

Mediator between God and man, the angels are relative mediators, and appear especially as ministering spirits for Christ and the kingdom of Christ. Christ's entrance into the world and departure from it, His birth, resurrection, and ascension, are all accompanied by the ministry of angels; and clear intimations are to be found in the Book of the Acts, that angels have also been co-operative in the extension of Christianity. Roman Catholicism has developed the doctrine of the active interference of angels to such an extent as to cast the mediatorial office of Christ completely into the shade; but later Protestantism, by speaking of angels as if they had long ago entirely ceased to take any active part in human affairs, has been no less guilty of taking a one-sided view of this question. When Christ says, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (John i. 51), we are to understand this as signifying, that through the whole course of history angels will continue to be active; that when Christ comes with His kingdom, "ministering spirits" will be ready, in the fullest and most comprehensive sense of the expression.—*Bp. Martensen.*

[12756] Albeit the angels deserve our reverence, yet they desire not our adoration. Indeed, the evil angels request it; it was what the devil begged of Christ, to fall down and worship him. But the good refuse it. "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant" (Rev. xix. 10).—*Rev. Thos. Adam*, 1630.

[12757] Angels are not to be worshipped for the following reasons: (1) God alone is to be worshipped (Matt. iv. 10); (2) Scripture expressly condemns angel-worship (Col. ii. 18); (3) No such worship was practised by prophets or apostles; (4) It is inconsistent with their nature as creatures and servants; (5) The angel who appeared to John expressly refused the ascription of Divine honour (Rev. xix. 10). —*H. Venema.*

[12758] No angel, during the life of Jesus, ever in His presence spoke to man It behoved the servants to be silent when the Master stood by.—*R. Stier.*

XIX. The Powers of Darkness and the Dominion of Satan.

1 History of the doctrine of devils.

(1) *In all ages there has been a widespread belief that evils, not accounted for by human agency, are the result of an intelligent purpose.*

[12759] The Manichæans imagined an evil principle co-ordinate with God; and the Gnostics a malevolent world-maker, at once subordinate and hostile to Him. In opposition to both these, the Fathers believed that a multitude of angels, created by God in a state of innocence, had revolted from their allegiance under the leadership of one of superior rank or power, whom they distinguished as the devil, or Satan. They disagreed as to when and how this revolt took place. The prevailing opinion was that it occurred after the creation of the world, and before the fall of man. Tatian (170), however, seems to regard the fall of Satan as a consequence of his part in man's first sin; while Augustine (430) imagines that men were created to fill the void left by the fall of the rebellious angels. Many of the early Fathers, by a strange anachronism, associated Gen. vi. 2 with the fall of the angels, whose sin they supposed to be lasciviousness; others defined it as pride or envy, either of man or of the Son of God. Gradually this latter opinion displaced the former.

To these fallen spirits the Fathers applied the name of "demons," which, in the Greek mythology, had denoted a kind of spiritual beings intermediate between gods and men. To the acts or influence of these demons every kind of ill was ascribed. Hermas (140), Clement of Alexandria (220), and Origen (254) supposed that particular vices were promoted by individual evil spirits; one demon provoking to envy, another to lust, &c. But all the Fathers agreed that, while the devil and his subordinates may tempt and allure, they cannot compel any one to sin without his own consent.

Throughout the patristic period there was a widespread belief in the frequency of demoniacal possession, which was supposed to simulate disease, madness, or inspiration. Accordingly, the office of exorcist had a recognized place in the ecclesiastical system. Adjuration in the name of Christ, and especially the sign of the cross, were thought to be effectual means of expelling or exposing demons; and by the fourth century exorcism had become a usual preliminary of baptism.

The fallen spirits were believed to be consciously under the wrath of God. It was disputed whether their fall was irretrievable. The general opinion was that they could have no place of repentance. Justin (165) thought they would be unchangeably wicked, not of necessity, but of their own free-will. Clement of Alexandria (220) asserts that the devil can repent, but does not intimate any hope that he will. Origen (254) cherished the hope that *all* fallen beings would be restored; and Gregory of Nyssa (394) and Didymus of Alexandria also (395), but faintly. This hope was combated by Cyril of Jerusalem (386), Jerome (420), Augustine (430), and the Emperor Justinian. During the Middle Ages much speculation was rife. Aquinas (1274) thought the power of demons much limited since the Advent. The popular belief attributed witchcraft to their agency and confounded them with imps and goblins. Demoniacal possession was still believed in, and is sanctioned by the Roman Church to-day.

From the remotest ages a belief in witchcraft and sorcery had been everywhere more or less generally entertained; but from the fifteenth century onward, throughout Western Christendom, it attained a frightful development. The

popular belief was assailed by Cornelius Agrippa (1535) and a few other writers, of whom Reginald Scott (1584) is the most distinguished. In reply to the latter, James VI., king of Scotland, wrote his "Demonology" (1597), which stimulated the prevailing superstition till it became a perfect mania. In Germany, Scotland, England, and America many thousands of innocent persons—chiefly aged women, and many of them lunatics—were burnt or otherwise tortured to death as witches, on evidence such as should not have convicted a known thief of larceny. Catholics, Protestants, and Puritans were equally infatuated. At length the superstition was successfully combated by Balthazar Becker (1698) and Christian Thomas (1702). Soon, among the advocates of what were called "enlightened views," the devil became an object of derision; his existence was doubted or denied; and in the present day there is not a little scepticism on the subject within the Church. Swedenborg (1772) denied the personality of the devil, and maintained that all fallen spirits derive their origin from the human race. Popular belief in the prince of darkness has been rather weakened than confirmed by the mutually inconsistent representations of the poets—Milton's "Satan," Goethe's "Mephistopheles," Byron's "Lucifer," &c. On the other hand, much attention has lately been directed to the subject in connection with spiritualistic and mesmeric manifestations. —*T. G. Crippen* (*condensed*).

2 Arguments for their existence.

[12760] If there were no evil spirits in existence, it appears to me impossible that Jesus Christ could have acted as we know He did when curing diseases, and endeavouring, at the same time, to banish the darkness of superstition and idolatry from the world. How could there possibly ever be a more favourable opportunity to inform and convince men, that what they thought possessions of evil spirits were only epilepsies, or cases of insanity, than when He who made the assertion could have demonstrated its truth by effecting an instantaneous, miraculous cure? Is it possible that, instead of doing so, He should have acted as if they were cases of real possession, addressed the supposed demons, pretended to hold conversations with them, commanded them to come out, and permitted them to enter into the bodies of animals? How could He have adopted a more effectual way of deceiving both the subjects and the witnesses of His miracles, and sanctioning all their erroneous ideas?

[12761] All creatures, however great their powers, however pure and noble their natures, must be fallible or defectible. Infallibility is obviously one of the incommunicable prerogatives of Jehovah. If then they were fallible, they may have fallen. To grant the former, and yet to deny the latter, involves a contradiction. And sin would certainly, from its very nature and necessary operation, pervert their views and feelings, and render them depraved creatures. And may we not conclude that the depth and malignity of the depravity would, if they were left entirely to themselves, and especially in a situation which excluded them from hope, and led them to view God as having cast them off for ever, be proportional to their former excellence, to the exalted privileges which they enjoyed, and to the folly, the enormity, and the high aggravations of their crime? that the depth of the gulf of perdition into which they sunk, would be in proportion to the height of that elevation of honour and happiness from which they precipitated themselves? Do not facts prove that such is the influence of sin, the result of wilful rebellion against the God of heaven? If so, then these fallen beings would immediately become, as far as they had opportunity, the tempters of others, endeavouring to involve their fellow-creatures in a condition like their own.—*W. Scott.*

3 Prevalence of the belief amongst pagans.

[12762] A belief has very generally, indeed almost universally, prevailed amongst pagans, of the existence of some malignant, wicked, invisible agents, or evil demons, who felt a pleasure in doing mischief, and injuring men in various ways; and as Dr. Doddridge observes, "many of those deities whom they worshipped were, according to their own mythology, so vicious and malignant, as to resemble devils rather than good angels." We are assured that the ancient Eastern nations in general, and amongst the rest the Chaldeans, admitted the existence of certain evil spirits, clothed in a vehicle of grosser matter; and in subduing or counteracting these they placed a great part of the efficacy of their religious incantations; and that the Egyptians believed in an "evil principle from which they conceived themselves liable to misfortune, and which they deprecated as an object of terror, under the name of Typhon." And we find from the accounts of missionaries that similar notions exist amongst many of the heathen at the present day. They have their malignant as well as their benevolent deities. Some of them worship the devil and not God, and assign as their reason for doing so, that God is good, and will not injure them, and will even confer benefits on them without solicitation or worship; but that, as the devil is malignant, it is necessary to propitiate him by their sacrifices.—*Ibid.*

4 The probable grades of the fallen angels.

[12763] As it evidently follows from the representations of the Scriptures that there are gradations, as it regards intellect and dignity, amongst the holy angels, so it is probable that those who fell might belong to several orders of the celestial hierarchy; and consequently that there are subordination and superiority amongst them still—that some excel others in capacity and power, and exercise a degree of authority over those who are inferior; and even that

some are worse, more depraved, more impious, and malignant, and impure than others. Whilst the Scriptures, as well as fact, assure us that amongst the fallen sons of men "there is none righteous, no, not one;" that all are under the influence of the carnal mind, which "is enmity against God;" yet some, even of those who are placed, as far as possible, precisely in the same circumstances, are far more depraved than others; it is reasonable then to suppose that similar gradations in wickedness will exist amongst fallen spirits. Farther, we find that outlaws and robbers, and even systematic murderers (such as Thugs and slave-dealers), are obliged to have some kind of government amongst them, to have rulers and laws; and that the boldest and most vigorous, those who are best qualified to be ringleaders in mischief, and to repel the attacks of enemies, or the efforts of those who endeavour to reduce them to order, and maintain the authority of law and government, are invested with rule amongst them. So we may suppose, nay, we may regard it as certain, it is amongst those unhappy beings who are banished from heaven, and are leagued in rebellion against the Sovereign of the universe. The principles of rationality, even when perverted, the influence of sin, to a certain extent the necessity of the case, would lead to this combination which we have supposed. So far, then, we may allow the representation of our great poet to be correct:

"Devil with devil damned firm concord holds."
—*Ibid.*

5 Their immaterialism.

(1) *They are always represented in Scripture as spirits, but never as appearing in bodily form as devils.*

[12764] The devils are always represented in Scripture as spirits, but never as appearing in bodily form as devils. They are therefore invisible and impalpable. Satan indeed may possess the power, under Divine permission, of putting on material shape; yet I apprehend that it is not for mortal eyes to look on pure immaterial spirit face to face. It is common to represent spirit like unto flame. This theory may be derived from the theophanies of the Bible. God appeared to Moses in a burning bush; and the Shekinah, the visible representation of Jehovah, a bright luminous appearance, sat on the mercy-seat in the temple. Spirits are supposed to possess the same nature—"shreds from the pall of glory riven." They are represented in the human shape; they cast no shadow; you may penetrate them as you would a shade; and they travel with an undulating motion without touching the ground. All this is a vain attempt to comprehend the unrevealed. I cannot define the nature or essence of spirit. It is doubtless a substance, but not such as we are familiar with. It must possess dimension; for it is limited to place. Satan is therefore finite. He cannot be in two places at one time. He is not omnipresent.—*T. McRae.*

6 Their special properties and modes of operation.

[12765] Probably they may possess a degree of vigour of intellect, of power of acquiring knowledge, of operating on matter, and rendering it subservient to their purposes, of communicating their ideas to one another, and of influencing the minds of men, and therefore of acting the part of tempters, of which we have little conception; and the actions which are ascribed to them in Scripture, and the hints which it contains respecting their influence on men, as well as the views which are given of the powers and actions of good angels, confirm this opinion. And also, we must take into the account their invisibility to human vision, their immortality, their exhaustless vigour and power of action (for exhaustless it may be deemed when compared to ours), their long and varied experience, gained in heaven, on earth, and in hell; and then we shall see that they possess vast advantages over us in our spiritual warfare; they must, therefore, prove most dangerous enemies.—*W. Scott.*

[12766] In endeavouring to form some idea of the power of fallen spirits, and therefore of their ability to tempt and effect mischief, we must take into the account their activity, and the rapidity with which they can move from place to place. We are far from attributing to them omnipotence, or omnipresence, or ubiquity, as some of the opponents of this doctrine, in their attempts to caricature it, and cause it to appear absurd, have been pleased to assert. According to the representations of the word of God, we believe, not that Satan is everywhere present, but that he "*goes* about seeking whom he may devour," that he goes "to and fro in the earth;" not that he is omnipotent, but that he "seeks whom *he may* devour." And whatever may be the number of fallen spirits, we do not think that they literally fill the earth or the air, or that they are constantly present with men, or permitted always to tempt them. Though this fallen, sinful world is infested with them, it does not follow that it is their only range or habitation. This is not implied either in the statements of the Bible or in the general belief on this subject. If they go about, they must, according to any ideas or conceptions we can form, transport themselves from place to place, and this they may be able to do with inconceivable rapidity—"to fly through nature ere the moment end." The well-known passage in Dan. ix. 3, 20–23, is commonly thought to prove and illustrate this.—*Ibid.*

[12767] Of wicked spirits there is a twofold mode of operation; *i.e.*, when they either take complete and entire possession of the mind, so as to allow their captives the power neither of understanding nor feeling; as, for instance, is the case with those commonly called possessed, whom we see to be deprived of reason, and insane (such as those were who are related in the Gospel to have been cured by the Saviour); or

when by their wicked suggestions they deprave a sentient and intelligent soul with thoughts of various kinds, persuading it to evil, of which Judas is an illustration, who was induced at the suggestion of the devil to commit the crime of treason, according to the declaration of Scripture, that "the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Him." —*Origen.*

7 Nature and characteristics of Satan, the prince of devils.

(1) *Negatively considered.*

a. Not the mere principle of evil.

[12768] The theory which makes Satan synonymous with the principle of evil is irreconcilable with reason and nature. By a principle of nature is understood a property, and thus it is a principle of nature that all bodies mutually attract each other; and this we term a property of matter. Hence, if evil is a principle of nature, and especially inherent in matter, then it must be a property of matter. Now, every student knows that every property is perpetually present with its substance. Extension, for example, is always associated with matter. You cannot find matter in any condition without length, breadth, and thickness. So of attraction; it is impossible to conceive of any material substance over which this property does not exert its power. And so of every other. Then if evil be a property of matter, it must always and universally be connected with matter, in all forms and in all conditions. If the devil is identical with a quality of nature, he must show himself universally with nature: he must be in everything tangible or visible. Now, is this so? Is evil as universally prevalent and necessary as extension or attraction? Is there evil in the sunshine? Is the devil in the dew? Is Satan in the rose? This block of wood—what harm can you say of it? Even that stone which has fallen from some nodding cliff and crushed your limb, why, what evil has it done? In itself it is inert and passive. Move it, and it will continue to move in the direction you give it till stopped by some other power. When resting on that cliff it would have remained there for ever, had not some extraneous force started it from its moorings. No man in his senses would ever dream of bringing inanimate matter into judgment for wrongs done by it. The idea of evil never is presented in connection with matter till we ascend to a higher region of thought, till another and distinct power is introduced. The deduction is inevitable that evil is not always and necessarily present with matter. It resides in something else as its substance; and it cannot, therefore, be a property of matter. In other words, the principle of evil is not in nature.—*T. McRae.*

b. Not a self-existent or independent agent.

[12769] The evil spirit has been regarded as self-existent and independent of God. This view has been supported by the doctrine of correspondences or contraries. We have day and night, heat and cold, the negative and positive poles, attraction and repulsion, and many other such contraries in nature. Now, it is argued that we should expect the same characteristic in morals. We should look for moral polarity as well as material, for evil as the antithesis of good; and, if there be a good spirit, for an evil spirit likewise; for a devil as well as God. Thus the idea of some evil agent is introduced as self-existent and eternal. One consideration, however, is deemed sufficient to show the untenableness of this view. There can be but one infinity. The fundamental idea of infinitude is that it admits of no limitation; it is absolutely boundless. Thus we cannot conceive of two eternities. If we suppose a second, by that very hypothesis we annihilate the first. One gives bounds to the other. The first is limited by the second.—*Ibid.*

(2) *Positively considered.*

a. A malignant and wicked spirit, antagonistic to God and man.

[12770] The word Satan comes from the Hebrew שָׂטַן, which signifies to hate, to feel and act as a determined enemy to any one, to oppose, and it has the same meaning in the Syriac, Chaldee, and Arabic. Hence it is nearly synonymous in meaning with the word Diabolos, sygnifying, like it, an adversary, an accuser, and generally a false and malicious accuser. And the two terms are evidently used in the Scriptures to designate the same being. The fact that the word is not translated in the New Testament, though it easily might have been—its meaning is quite definite and well known—and that it generally has the article prefixed to it, shows plainly that it is employed as a proper name, to designate a certain well-known being. It is used about thirty-five times by the apostles and evangelists; and in almost all of them it is either applied to the same individual being, or else there is a reference to him; an intimation that those to whom it is given are acting like him, or in some way subserving his cause.—*H. Scott.*

[12771] Satan is wicked, extremely wicked, always wicked, totally wicked, incurably wicked. There is nothing in all the universe like him. There are wicked men in the world, monsters in crime; but they are not fiends; they are not universally corrupt; they are capable of some good; they feel some tender emotions. Even Nero could be generous sometimes. But the devil is utterly devoid of any holy sensibility. He is an absolute stranger to all love, to all pity, to all good. He is the very embodiment of all malignity, the concentration of all wrong, the essence of all injustice. There is not a single bright spot in all his dark character. There is not a sun that shines that he would not quench; not a star that twinkles that he would not extinguish; not a flower that blooms that he would not blight! There is not a laugh that rings out upon the air that he would not turn to lamentation; not a song that is sung

that he would not turn to wailing; not a happy being anywhere that he would not curse! Heaven itself he would make a hell. His language is blasphemy, his food is cruelty, his heart is hatred, his mind is revenge, and his life a perpetual damnation. It is his dark shadow that lends its horrors to all transgression; and the worst that we can say of anything is, that it is devilish.—*T. McRae.*

[12772] It is he who is said to have tempted Christ (Matt. iv. 10), to have prompted Judas in his sin (John xiii. 2), to have filled the heart of Ananias (Acts v. 3), to have hindered the apostle in a proposed journey (1 Thess. ii. 18), to have "buffeted" him with some unknown bodily ailment (2 Cor. xii. 7). He is described as tempting the saints (1 Thess. iii. 5), as going about like a roaring lion (1 Pet. v. 8), as counteracting the effect of the Word of God (Luke viii. 12), as sowing tares among the wheat (Matt. xiii. 39), as the instigator of persecution against the Church (Rev. ii. 10). To destroy his power was the special object of Christ's coming (Heb. ii. 14). He is the spirit who works in the disobedient (Eph. ii. 2), and who blinds the minds of them that believe not (2 Cor. iv. 4). To the unbelieving world he stands in a special relation as its patron and prince (John xii. 31, xiv. 30). For him and his angels there is reserved the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. xx. 10; Matt. xxv. 41). A description of better defined outline it is difficult to imagine. But, as we have said, Satan does not stand alone in his opposition to Christ: he is Beelzebub, "the prince of the devils" (Matt. xii. 24); he is ruler over "a kingdom" (ibid. 26); his angels are mentioned as well as himself; Christians are warned against the wiles of the devil (Eph. vi. 11), and also are enjoined to put on the armour of God if they would wage a successful war against "principalities, and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world" (ibid. 12, 13). In short, over against the kingdom of God, of which Christ is the Head, and for the coming of which we are taught to pray (Matt. vi. 10), stands a kingdom of darkness, of which Satan is the head, and from which it is our privilege as Christians to be delivered.—*E. A. Litton, M.A.*

[12773] In Scripture the plural form of the word is never applied to wicked, fallen spirits. When used in the plural, it describes wicked men, whilst the other apostate angels are described by other words, but translated "devils." So that, strictly and scripturally speaking, there is but one devil, the prince of the hosts of sin, the head of rebellion against God, the leader of apostate spirits.—*T. McRae.*

[12774] Our deadly foe slumbers not in his hatred. Never does he display it more actively than when a man is about to escape him altogether. His malice is fanned into a flame by that which seemed to quench it. He cannot but grieve and groan to see so many sins pardoned, so many works of death destroyed, so many grounds of accusation annulled. He quivers with rage to think that this sinner, now become a servant of Christ, will judge him and his angels. Therefore he watches, attacks, harasses him, striving to defile his soul by some fleshly concupiscence, to enslave it by the fetters of the age, to overthrow his faith by the fear of some earthly power, or to lead him astray into the paths of heresy. He besets him all around with snares and pitfalls.—*Tertullian.*

[12775] Ambrose brings in the devil boasting against Christ, and challenging Judas as his own; he is not thine, Lord Jesus, saith he, he is mine; his thoughts beat for me; he eats with Thee, but he is fed by me; he takes bread from Thee, but money from me; he drinks with Thee, but sells Thy blood to me. So when Satan prevails over the saints, look, O Christ, says he, are these the price of Thy blood? are these the objects of Thy love? are these the delight of Thy soul? what, are these Thy jewels? are these the apple of Thy eye? are these Thy pleasant portion? Why, lo how I lead them! lo how I triumph over them! they seem rather to be mine than Thine. Ah, Christians! resist as for life, that Satan may never have occasion thus to insult and triumph over Christ, &c.—*T. Brooks*, 1608-1680.

[12776] As he is the constant accuser of us to God, so, by a restless circle of malice, he is no less industrious and artificial in accusing God to us. The first engine by which he battered down our innocence, and brought sin into the world, was by insinuating into Eve's mind thoughts that God rather envied than designed their happiness, in forbidding them to eat of that one tree: and we know what success it had, to bereave man of an Almighty Friend, only by a false supposal that He was his enemy. Despair, which is the greatest instrument next to that of presumption, by which the devil draws men headlong into the fatal net of perdition, how and by what means does he cause it? Why, by representing God to the soul, as a tyrant and a tormentor; by tragical declamations upon His vindictive justice: that He is one full of eternal designs of revenge, rigid and implacable, exacting the utmost farthing from a poor bankrupt creature, that is not worth it. By such diabolical rhetoric does he libel and disgrace God to the hearts of His creatures. And he well knows, that by these arts he does his business effectually; forasmuch as it is impossible for the soul to love God, as long as it takes Him for an enemy and a destroyer.—*R. South, D.D.*, 1633-1716.

[12777] If ye have fallen,
It is but a step's fall—the whole ground beneath
Strewn woolly soft with promise; if ye have grieved,
Ye are too mortal to be pitiable.
Were ye wronged by me,
Hated and tempted and undone of me,

Still, what's your hurt to mine of doing hurt,
Of hating, tempting, and so ruining?
Self-orphaned by my will, and self-elect
To kingship of resistant agony
Toward the good around me—hating good and love,
And willing to hate good and to hate love,
And willing to will on so evermore.
—*E. B. Browning.*

8 Proof of his being.

[12778] The temptation of Christ directly contradicts the doctrine of no-devil. The agent in that wicked assault refuses very obstinately to be defined as the principle of evil. It cannot be forced into harmony with a property of nature. Our Saviour, in that solitary contest, was grievously tormented; His mind was sorely agitated; His soul was profoundly stirred by horrid thoughts, amazed by wicked, basphemous suggestions. Whence came they? The Scriptures ascribe them all to "the devil," "Satan," "the tempter."

9 His personality.

(1) *The truth involved.*

a. Satan is no abstract law or ideal conception of evil, but a being personal and conscious, and distinctively active as man, though with faculties unmeasurably beyond him.

[12779] It is a living spirit with whom we have to contend, as it is a "living God" whom we have to aid us: a being profound in purpose, subtle in arrangement, bold in enterprise, undaunted in execution; a being who knows us far better than we know ourselves, and hates us far more intensely than even his worst inspirations have instigated us to hate one another; a being whose compass of possible activity, extending through every region where temptation can extend, seems for a time permitted to span the universe, and even (if we may dare to interpret certain mysterious intimations of Holy Writ) to darken by his occasional presence, for some unfathomable purpose, the council chamber of the Omnipotent Himself.—*W. A. Butler.*

(2) *Its connection with the credibility of Scripture.*

[12780] The question of Satan's personality is one relating to the credibility of the Scriptures. The existence of the devil is so clearly taught in the Bible, so necessarily a part of the revealed Word, so legible on its very face, and so thoroughly interwoven with all of its deliverances, that to doubt it is to doubt the authenticity of the Bible itself. The entire system of Revelation stands or falls with the existence of Satan; not that *he* is essential to truth, but that the verity of the record concerning him is essential to God's honour and our hope. This fact, too, has worked itself out in history. In all ages of the Church, unbelief of this doctrine has been marked by a corresponding unbelief of the Scriptures. The man who can reject a doctrine so fully revealed as this, will find no difficulty in rejecting all, if it ever suits him to do so. The testimony of God's Word is not the measure of his faith. He is at sea, and may land in unknown regions.—*T. McRae.*

(3) *The logical consequences of its denial.*

[12781] The denial of his personality is but one of "the *wiles* of the devil"; a covert wherein the hunter of hell conceals himself till his prey comes within his power. The lion in ambush is very willing for his expected victim to believe that there is no such a being in all the world: the desperate bound, the crushing fall, will dispel the dream. Moreover, it stands confronted and condemned by that conviction which fastens itself on every candid reader who believes that the statements of Scripture were not intended to deceive. Yea, it violates the very genius and spirit of Revelation. It eviscerates the Bible of all significance, robs its grand and awful disclosures of all their verity, and converts them into a picture for the curious to stare at. Having the same proofs of the personality of Satan that we have of any other being unseen by us, they who preach a symbolical devil should also preach a symbolical Adam, a symbolical Christ, a symbolical God, a symbolical universe. That theory must be false which, when pushed to its conclusions, treats the Word of God as a mere record of myths or fables wherein nothing is revealed, and wherein a prodigious fancy is required to discover any sense at all.—*Ibid.*

10 His original fall.

[12782] The first sin which Satan committed, according to the general and most probable opinion, was pride (1 Tim. iii. 6). And when we consider the character, the original dignity and circumstances of Satan, as far as we can form any idea of them, ambition, leading him to aspire to be independent of God, if not equal to Him, was the sin into which he was most in danger of falling. If he was one of the loftiest spirits in heaven; if he felt working within him a mighty celestial energy of thought and action; if he was invested with authority over inferior spirits, all of which were yet powerful and glorious in their measure, and even in a high degree; if in these circumstances he sinned at all, the probability is, that it would be by forgetting his duty to his Maker, by arrogating to himself independence on God, if not equality to Him, and by requiring from inferior spirits that homage and obedience which were due to Jehovah. Hence we find that pride was the spirit which he breathed when he seduced our first parents, the essence of the sin to which he tempted them: "Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as *gods*, knowing good and evil:" equality to God was what he proposed to *them*. And as his design was to ruin them, what would appear to him more likely to accomplish his purpose than that which ruined himself? In accordance with this, we find that he endeavoured in the same way to overcome the blessed Redeemer. When his other attacks had failed, he proposed all the kingdoms of the world, and all the glory of them, hoping that

this might enkindle the flame of ambition in the breast of even the illustrious Messiah —*W. Scott.*

11 The miserable condition in eternal damnation of Satan and his associates.

[12783] Me miserable! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell;
And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide.
—*Milton.*

[12784] It is a generally admitted principle, established by reasoning and verified by facts, that the more excellent anything is in itself, and the more important the purposes to which it can be applied, the worse, the more corrupt and vile (if it is capable of vileness), the more destructive does it become when it is entirely perverted. What would be so injurious to man as the food on which he lives, or the air which he breathes, if its properties were so changed as to become the very reverse of what they are? It is not within the range of possibility that an irrational animal should ever become so hateful and pernicious a being as a thoroughly wicked man. It requires the perversion, the utter depravation of an angel, to make a devil; of an archangel, to produce the prince of the devils. In proportion, therefore, to the height of capacity and power, of dignity and happiness, to which Satan and his associates were raised by the omnipotence and bounty of the great Creator, must necessarily be the depth of the gulf of depravity and wretchedness into which they precipitated themselves by sin; a gulf out of which they can never rise, and from which we have fearful intimations in the Scriptures that God *will never raise them.* —*W. Scott.*

[12785] Darkness is a state obviously suitable for beings to whom the light of heaven was unsatisfactory and odious; and chains are most proper for beings whose proud and wanton wishes were discontented with the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Both also united form a degradation eminently fitted for beings who, at the head of the created universe, were impatiently ambitious of a higher station. Both at the same time constitute a proper temporary punishment for beings who rebelled against the government of God Himself.

12 The mighty but limited power of Satan.

[12786] Power of Satan. (1) Vast and mysterious. (*a*) Physically, over nature, animate and inanimate; over natural phenomena, probably over diseases, over the bodies of men; how far, and under what circumstances and limits, we cannot say, further than that it is an acknowledged truth of Scripture (Job. i 12, ii. 4-7; Luke xiii. 16; Acts x. 38; 1 Cor. v. 5; 2 Cor. xii. 7; 1 Tim. i. 20). (*b*) Spiritually, over the mind and spirit of man; to blind (2 Cor. iv. 4) and deceive (Rev. xx. 2, 3); to seduce (1 Tim. iv. 1); to harass and sift (Luke xxii. 31); to tempt (1 Chron. xxi. 1); to hinder the good seed taking root (Matt. xiii. 19); to sow tares (Matt. xiii. 25, 39); to thwart Christ's ministers in their work (1 Thess. ii. 18). (*c*) Over the world, as in a sense its permitted ruler and prince (John xii. 31, xvi. 11). (*d*) Over death, not as lord, but as executioner. But (2) limited. Whatever power Satan has, is only permitted and delegated; so he acknowledged himself (Luke iv. 6). The power of Satan is very far short of Divine power. Though so ubiquitous, by his countless agents, he is not personally omnipresent; nor is he omniscient. He cannot read the thoughts of the heart. He cannot foresee the future, further than by reason and experience of the past. He cannot force any human will. He cannot act apart from or in opposition to the permission given him from the Almighty. The power of Satan was curtailed at Christ's death, though how far we cannot say (John xii. 31; Col. ii. 15). It will be restrained during the millennium (Rev. xx. 1–3), and finally and for ever abolished at the great judgment (Rev. xx. 10).—*G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[12787] He is no longer free. He has his bounds; he is under the Divine direction; he can do nothing, especially to Christians, save as God permits him. Witness his assaults on Job —each onset against that holy man was by special permission. Christ said to Peter, "Satan hath desired thee to sift thee as wheat." Peter was put in his hands temporarily, at Satan's request; but then his power against him was limited; Peter's faith must not fail. And so, amid all the trials and conflicts and temptations of "this present evil world," the Christian hears the voice of God charging this wicked apostate, "Touch not mine anointed!" Satan is, therefore, in chains.—*T. McRae.*

13 His curtailed knowledge.

[12788] Satan is not omniscient. He does not know all things. He is a creature, and, like man, acquires knowledge by study. He does not know all the mind of God. No created being can comprehend the Infinite. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." Angels and saints know some things of which Satan is ignorant. But when God's purposes are revealed, the devil learns them. He is familiar with the Bible. He studies Providence, and, by bringing his powers of analysis to bear on its conduct, he is able to penetrate the future much farther than mortals can; and when he cannot arrive at certainty, he may, by his superior sagacity, reach a high probability. Neither does he know all the mind of man. It is only when he gets full possession of the soul that he becomes privy to all the thoughts of any one. I think that there is some mode by which, at times, he gains access to our minds; but usually, I imagine, he ascertains our thoughts by watching our lives. He presents some object of desire, as the apple to Eve, or the treasure to the thief, and notes how that succeeds, and thus learns the inward motions of the mind. But it is clear that he does not know all that is in

man, especially in Christians, from the history of Job.—*Ibid.*

14 **His subtle purposes and malicious designs against man.**

[12789] The devil's hatred of us bears date with our very being, and his opposition is as early as his hatred; for it is of too active a virulence to lie still and dormant, without putting forth itself in all the actings of a mischievous hostility. The devil hates us enough as men, but much more as believers; he maligns us for the privileges of our creation, but much more for the mercies of our redemption: and as soon as ever we list ourselves in the service of the great Captain of our salvation, he bids present defiance to us, and proclaims perpetual war against us; which he will never be wanting to carry on with all the force, art, and industry that malice, bounded within the limits of created power, can reach unto.—*R. South, D.D.*, 1633-1716.

[12790] As we know if a prisoner get out of prison, and make an escape, the jailer will not let him go so, but make hue and cry after him, raise the country, lay all the towns and ways to take him, till at last he seize upon him, and bring him back to the stinking dungeon which he came from, so doth the devil deal by us, when we have made an escape, got out of the prison-house of our own sins, he will not let us go so, but makes after us, lays all baits and gins possible to see if possibly he can entrap us, that so he may carry us back to our former old courses to walk in the ways of darkness.—*J. Smith*, 1629.

[12791] When a man cleaves a block, he first enters it with small wedges and then with greater; and so doth the devil make entrance into the soul by degrees.—*T. Manton, D.D.*, 1620-1677.

[12792] He hath not left the world, no, not the Christian world, quite ignorant of his methods in these kinds; of training men, by gradual steps, into things, first, that seem innocent, and then into such familiarities (whether their real distress or their curiosity were the first handle he took hold of them by, or the engine by which he drew them), till at length it comes to express covenanting. If the matter come not so far, it is rare to come off from the least tamperings without a scratch. "He that is born of God keeps himself, that the evil one may not touch him," as knowing he designs to touch mortally, and, if he touch, to kill. If it proceed so far as a solemn league, how tragical consequences doth story abound with!—*Howe*, 1690.

[12793] If Satan speed not in this black shape, he at other times puts on the glory of an angel, and perhaps may bring into his remembrance even good things, but out of their due time, that he may hinder him of some greater good. As at the preaching of the Word he may cast into his mind unseasonably, godly meditations, that so he may distract and deprive him of the blessings of a profitable hearer, at the time of prayer he may fill his head with holy instructions that so he may cool his fervency, and bereave him of the benefit of so blessed an exercise. With these, and a thousand more such-like vexations in his thoughts, the child of God is sore troubled and much exercised.—*R. Bolton*, 1637.

[12794] He is not such a bungler at his art as to use the same nets or baits indifferently for all sorts of game. He will not tempt a shrewd, active, aspiring mind with the gross and low pleasures of wine and women; nor a sot or an epicure with the more refined allurements of power or high place. But still suiting his proposals to the temper of the persons whom he addresses them to, he strikes for the most part home and sure.—*R. South, D.D.*, 1633-1716.

[12795] When the impious King Antiochus entered the temple of Jerusalem to lay it waste, his first act was to remove the golden altar, and the candlestick, which was also of gold. The devil acts in the same manner when he intends to deprive of spiritual good that soul which is the temple of the living God: he takes from it the altar—that is, fervour of mind; he removes from it the candlestick—that is, the light which makes known the eternal maxims. The devil cannot take from the soul the light of faith: he, however, removes the light of consideration, so that the soul may not reflect on what it believes. And as it is of no avail to open the eyes in the dark, so says St. Augustine, "it is of no advantage to be near the light if the eyes are closed." The eternal maxims, considered in the light of faith, are most clear; yet, if we do not open the eyes of the mind by meditating on them, we live as if we were perfectly blind, and so precipitate ourselves into every vice.—*St. Ignatius.*

[12796] If God casts down the soul [Satan] will trample upon it. He will set a new stamp and name upon every sin. Every backsliding shall be total apostasy. Every sin against light and knowledge shall be heightened into the sin against the Holy Ghost. The conscience shall not be able to produce one argument for itself, but he will retort it. If it shall plead former assurance of God's favour, from the inward witness of His Spirit, Satan would persuade the soul that it was but a spirit of delusion. If it shall argue an interest in God's promises from former obedience, as a fruit of that faith that never fails, Satan will tell the soul that it cannot prove its former obedience to proceed from such a faith, since even a hypocrite may go very far. And lastly, if it would draw comfort from that abundant redemption that the death of Christ offers to all that are truly sensible of their sins, Satan will reply, that to such as, by relapsing into sin, have trampled under foot the blood of the covenant, there remains no further propitiation for sin. Now with these and the like rejoinders will he endeavour to

baffle and invalidate all a sinner's pretences to pardon.—*R. South, D.D.*, 1633-1716.

[12797] Since it is out of doubt the devil may have some hand in our outward affliction, we are concerned to take so much the more care that he may not have his end upon us by it. A hand he may have, and we cannot determine how far; but whether it be more or less, great care we are concerned to take how to frustrate his design. He has the most mischievous ends that can be, and designs worse things to us than the affliction which is the means, whatsoever that be. He would fain engage us in a controversy with God, would have us contend with Him; murmur, fret, blaspheme and curse God, and therewith send out our last and dying breath. That was his design upon Job. Let us labour to frustrate it, as he did.

[12798] As he was the first and grand apostate from God, so he is restless, and indefatigable to propagate that apostasy and rebellion amongst mankind, and to draw them into a confederacy against their Maker. He is said to have been "a liar and a murderer from the beginning;" and chiefly does he attempt the murder of souls by making them like himself. And so intent is he upon his accursed game, that he will compass sea and land, tempt and entice night and day, use both force and art to debauch and deface God's image in the soul, to rob it of its innocence; and, in a word, to plunge it into all kind of filth, folly, and impurity. It is his business, for the labour he employs about it; and his recreation, for the pleasure he takes in it: for every upright and virtuous person is a reproach to him, and upbraids him with the loss of that, which he was so much concerned to have preserved entire. Holiness carries its beauty with it; and there are none that malign and envy the beautiful so much as those that are deformed; but sin has left upon the devil a spiritual deformity, greater and more offensive than any bodily deformity whatsoever.—*R. South, D.D.*, 1633-1716.

15 Man's attitude towards the prince of darkness.

(1) *Should be one of resolute defiance.*

[12799] "I challenge all the world," the archfiend cries,
"To do me battle, and who dares defy
The hosts of hell?" while swiftly, to assail defenceless man,
He earthward sweeps with his attendant train.
But, conscious man looks up to God in prayer,
And, fronting the bold fiend, exclaims, "I dare!"
—*A. M. A. W.*

(2) *Should be one of repelling hatred.*

[12800] Satan is worthy of universal execration. The emotion of hatred was not planted in the human breast for nought. It was originally designed as a protection against evil. When our affections are in a normal state, they instinctively embrace whatever is lovely; and our attachments necessarily increase as the object of attachment increases in loveliness. Hence, God, being supremely attractive, is worthy of our supreme love. Now it is plain, on the other hand, that when any object appears to us utterly destitute of all amiability, we can have no attachment for it. Our sensibilities are quiescent. And when that object presents the opposite qualities, as it becomes possessed of the repulsive properties, our affections are violated and repelled. Our love is aroused against it. And this is hatred. The same heart hates that loves; the same sensations are excited—only in a different direction. Hatred is the nausea of the soul at the reception of the impalatable; it is love outraged. And as such it is lawful, it is Divine. But Satan is the great deformity, possessing every abhorrent attribute. He is superlatively wicked, and therefore superlatively hateful.—*T. McRae.*

PART III.

BREACH OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

PAGE

THE FACT AND FRUIT OF SIN 381

PART III.

BREACH OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

SYLLABUS.

	PAGE
I. The Fall of Man	381
II. The Reality, Significance, and Primary Manifestations of Sin	385
III. The Connection between Sin and Suffering	386
IV. God, in Relation to Human Sin	387
V. The Enfeebled Condition of Fallen Man	387

PART III.

BREACH OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

DIVISION A.

THE FACT AND FRUIT OF SIN.

I. The Fall of Man.

1 The antecedent state of man in Paradise.

[12801] The notices which the Book of Genesis furnishes of the period before the Fall are, as might be expected, very brief; for the object of Scripture is all along to make wise unto salvation the race of men as at present situated. It is no marvel, therefore, that it hastens on to the era of Adam's apostasy, by which the human family were reduced to the condition in which we now find ourselves. We read: "The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed." And again, it is said with regard to his employment, that "the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it." It is difficult to understand what was the nature of the place in which Adam was thus caused to dwell. We know from the primary charge to him and his descendants that they should replenish the earth and subdue it, that the entire globe was destined eventually to be occupied by the human race; and the whole earth previous to the Fall was evidently itself possessed of a resemblance at all events to Paradise; for we read it denounced as an express curse consequent upon transgression, that it should bring forth thorns and thistles, and only yield to man its produce with the sweat of his brow. It was, however, in some spot chosen immediately by God; guarded, it may be, more peculiarly by angelic ministers, and luxuriant with extraordinary beauty, that the first man went forth to his work and to his labour.—*J. R. Woodford, D.D.*

2 The Scriptural account of the origin of evil.

[12802] The power of sin has prevailed during the history of mankind, how remote soever the periods to which we retrace it. The origin of evil has ever been a problem of the human mind. The answer furnished by Holy Scripture is its simplest solution. Sin cannot have proceeded from God, since He is both the holy and the beneficent One. It cannot have arisen from the nature of matter—the nature of our body, or the like—for even our corporeal and sensuous nature is of God's creation. Hence it can have originated only from man himself, from his own free act, from a fall from his original purity and excellence—a purity and excellence of which we no longer retain the possession, though we still bear within us a craving after it; like the evening glow after the departed daylight, or the memory of a lost happiness—a memory with which the traditions of all nations are pervaded.—*Luthardt.*

[12803] The Biblical narrative depicts the sin of our first parents as the result of a temptation which came upon man, and was the cause of his fall, thus intimating the existence of a seducing spiritual power external to man—a view subsequently attaining a more developed doctrinal form, and made of prominent importance in the New Testament. Against no other doctrine, however, is modern consciousness more prejudiced than this. And certainly, when it is employed in the service of superstition and fanaticism, or perverted to extenuate human guilt, our moral sense justly resists it. And yet it is the interest of mankind to regard man as tempted, and not as the inventor and first author of sin. Man is not in harmony with sin: he is not Satanic. If he were so, if he had been the originator of sin, he would be incapable of redemption. . . . Sin has not so much proceeded from him as entered into him—a fact which, while it does not extenuate his guilt, alleviates its consequences, which makes sin itself appear the sadder, by showing us that it is not confined to our hearts, but that, as an objective power external to ourselves, it exercises a dominion in the world, and casts its shadow even over our inner life.—*Ibid.*

3 The Mosaic narration of the temptation of man by Satan, and the subsequent fall from innocence.

[12804] The third chapter of Genesis fur-

nishes many interesting and profitable matters for consideration. It contains two distinct subjects, of the highest and most general interest that either reason or revelation can present to the mind. The first sin which it relates, and the first promise of a Saviour which it contains —the *fall* and the *redemption* of man, which it records and prophesies—are the two great epochs in his history, and affecting, without a single exception, the whole human race. The simple, brief, yet full statement which it makes of man's fall from innocence, and of his consequent forfeiture of the Divine image, in which he was originally created—holy, happy, spiritual, and immortal; the subtlety of the tempter; the various steps in the progress of the temptation; the comprehensiveness of its character, the contagion of its nature, and the delusiveness of its promises; its immediate effects upon the soul itself, in the destruction of its amicable relation and happy intercourse both with God and man; and its necessary consequences of external suffering—all these simply and faithfully shadow forth that which must be the progress of sin, while time lasts, in every individual soul. Thus does this chapter furnish an epitome of the history of sin, in its access to the soul, its true nature, its immediate and internal effects, and its necessary external concomitants.—*Rev. John M. Hiffernan, A.M.*

[12805] The subtlety of the tempter, cautious in not proposing directly to an innocent soul the full extent of sin to which it was his design ultimately to lead it, as well knowing the wisdom of that cautionary maxim, with which even philosophy would repel the first inroads of sin, *nemo repente fuit turpissimus;* the delicate but ever-deepening shades of the seduction; the almost imperceptible but steadily progressive cloudings of guilt which ushered in the midnight of the soul, until the crime actually committed brings palpable evidence to awaken the slumbering spirit and scare the astounded conscience; the madness of ever holding parley with the tempter instead of immediately repelling him; of meditating upon temptation, instead of resolutely banishing it from the mind—all these are clearly and forcibly illustrated in the dialogue between the serpent and Eve. He approaches her with the apparently simple and innocent inquiry whether God had really issued the prohibition of which he had heard. But there was a spirit and a meaning more than met the ear, and which cautiously insinuated a doubt that God could indeed have issued so arbitrary, so unmeaning, so severe a prohibition. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Contrast with this (Satan's narrow and false version of it) God's liberally permissive command, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." Observe here how he states the exception, as if it had been the rule, and converts a general privilege, with one solitary exception, into an absolute prohibition. And such is ever the treacherous plan of the seducer from the paths of innocence. His grand object is to render obedience wearisome and constrained; and to this end he conceals every privilege and magnifies every restraint, that he may alienate our affections from the laws of holiness, and from the friends of virtue and of our true happiness. Here then was Eve's easy and impregnable stand of defence: for here she was upon the appointed post of duty, and would have been supported by the whole power of Omnipotence. While, therefore, she held this post, she must have been invincible. But "when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked."—*Ibid.*

4 Doctrinal import of the Mosaic narrative.

[12806] Whatever views are held as to the nature of the narrative in Genesis ii., iii., all who believe it to be a record of Divine revelation find in it the following points of doctrine: 1. That God, after creating man, placed him in a state of probation. 2. That the test of his probation was obedience to the Divine law. 3. That the temptation to disobedience came from an evil power outside of man. 4. That the temptation appealed both to the intellect and to the senses, leading first to unbelief in God; secondly, to putting "self" in place of God, and thereby to the beginning of evil lust. 5. That in the exercise of free-will, man yielded and sinned. 6. That the consequences of the sin were knowledge of good and evil, separation from God, and death, the curse lighting upon man, and upon nature also. Auberlin, referring to the three constituents of the sin named above, viz., unbelief, self-love, and lust, remarks as follows: "That these three parts of the idea of sin are not accidental, but substantially express it and exhaust it, is shown not only in the fact that all sin that comes before us in life may be referred to them, but also in the fact that they correspond to the three fundamental elements of man's being and consciousness—spirit, soul, body—the God-consciousness, self-consciousness, and world-consciousness. These have all become corrupted and perverted. They have become respectively alienation from God, selfishness, love of the world. The first and highest element of human nature—the spiritual—is negatived, obscured, made powerless; the two others—the lower—are pushed into extreme but unhealthy prominence and activity. Man has become physical and fleshly. Unbelief is the negative, the union of self-seeking, and the lust of the senses is the positive element in the idea of sin. Man no longer wishes for God; he is bent on having the creature in both ways—the mental and natural, the subjective and objective; he will have his own Ego and the world too. According to Genesis iii. 5, 6, the selfish-

ness is, as it were, the soul, sensuousness the body of sin. The first is the deep, invisible root, the second the external manifestation. The Ego, separated from God, seeks in the world the elements on which it lives. Genesis thus comprehends the various opposing theories of men on the nature of sin, the theory of selfishness, which in recent times is represented by Julius Müller, and that of the senses by Schleiermacher and Rothe. It leads both ethical theories back to a religious basis, and in that matter modern thought has a great deal to learn.—*Prof. G. F. Comfort.*

5 The immediate effects of the fall of man.

(1) *Intellectual, moral, physical, and spiritual deterioration.*

[12807] The understanding was so wounded by the violence of the fall, that not only its light is much impaired, but its power is so weakened, as to the lower faculties, that those which, according to the order of nature, should obey, have to rule. Diseases have shattered the excellent frame of man's body; and, by a new dispensation, immortality is swallowed up of mortality. The same disaster and decay, also, has invaded his spirituals. The passions rebel, every faculty would usurp and rule; and there are so many governors that there can be no government. The light within us is become darkness; and the understanding, that should be eyes to the blind faculty of the will, is blind itself, and so brings all the inconveniences that attend a blind follower under the conduct of a blind guide. He that would have a clear, ocular demonstration of this, let him reflect upon that numerous litter of strange, senseless, absurd opinions that crawls about the world to the disgrace of reason and the unanswerable reproach of a broken intellect.—*R. South, D.D.*, 1633–1716.

[12808] 1. Their moral affections were turned away from God as their supreme good.

2. The spirit of life from God was withdrawn from them as a living force within their own spirits.

3. They therefore became dead in spirit.

4. They are mortal in body.

5. They became subject to many physical evils that would not have been experienced had they not committed sin.

6. They became subject to mental infirmities unknown in a state of holiness.

7. They became subject to an undue activity of many of their appetites, and passions, and desires.

8. They became incapable of any higher life than that which resulted from the law of the flesh—the law of the carnal mind.

9. They became conscious of guilt.

10. They were filled with an expectation of evil—"a fearful looking for of judgment to come," as the result of transgression.

11. They experienced in many ways the just anger of God.

12. They lost for themselves, and also for their posterity, that life and all its blessedness, which had been promised on condition of obedience.

13. They thus became the head of a race which necessarily inherited their own nature, with all its evil tendencies—and which became subject to all those penal ills which their sin had brought upon themselves.—*J. W. Bailey.*

[12809] There are ethical laws, and there are laws of nature: laws which ask for the free and loyal obedience of the will, and laws which are illustrated by the unvarying sequence of antecedents and consequents in spheres from which freedom is excluded. What may be described as the structural laws of the moral and spiritual life of man are of the second kind. The alternative of obedience and transgression is never submitted to our choice. Sin is invariably followed by a deterioration of our moral and spiritual nature. By repeated acts of transgression evil habits are invariably strengthened. Evil passions acquire constant accessions of energy if they are not controlled. By wrongdoing we become less able to discriminate between good and evil, and those forces of our nature which refuse to listen to the voice of duty are strengthened in their revolt; the sensibility of conscience is diminished, and the authority of conscience is impaired. In other words, the more we sin the harder it becomes to forsake sin. These laws are in a very true sense "self-acting." They are precisely analogous to the laws of our physical organization, and to the laws of the material universe, and to the laws which belong to the province of political economy and of sociology. "Defender or avenger they have none, and they need none."—*R. W. Dale, D.D.*

6 Its tremendous ultimate consequences.

(1) *Generally considered as to the universal inheritance of sin and death.*

[12810] The objection has been made that the Bible, while describing the first sin as an external, sensuous occurrence, and almost as a childish act, yet makes it an event entailing the most tremendous consequences upon the whole human race. But instead of dwelling on the outward circumstances, we should penetrate this external covering, and observe the moral actions going on within the heart. And these are of the deepest significance. When we contemplate man in the original, happy harmony of his mind and will with God, and then behold him misconceiving God's love, suspecting that He was arbitrarily and enviously denying him a good in which his future happiness was involved; then rejecting God's commandment and taking his future into his own hand to fashion it for himself in the way of disobedience to God—we shall be constrained to admit that the whole disposition of his heart towards God, his Father, was perverted; that he had departed from his childlike relationship to God—had separated himself from God—had, like the prodigal son, in heart forsaken his Father's

house and gone into the far country of alienation from Him. What wonder was it, then, that he met with misery? We must not stop merely at externals—these were indifferent and caused by the infant-like condition of the first man—but must strive to appreciate the moral significance of the occurrence. We shall then perceive and confess it to have been an event of momentous importance, and the more so from its position at the very commencement of history, and while the race was still in its youth, and its nature not yet settled. It is this which gives this event the importance of a catastrophe involving in its consequences all mankind.—*Luthardt.*

[12811] This deed at the beginning was, by its very nature, fatal to the whole race; for it was the deed of their head, in whom the whole race was represented and comprised. We cannot but feel that it concerns us all, that it is no indifferent or accidental matter, but that we are personally concerned therein, as is ever and everywhere the case in the transactions of one who represents a community. And that this fact does concern us, we learn, moreover, from its actual results. For we all have to suffer for it. Who can deny that there is an evil tendency in us from our very birth—a tendency showing itself in manifold and even involuntary manifestations of its sinful source! Certainly there is a sort of innocence in a child—its very naughtinesses are often most lovable; but in the midst of all its innocence and loveliness an ominous background is often seen. There is an old Greek proverb: "He who does not get thrashed does not get educated." And who would not say that nature must not be left to itself or else the weeds will spring up as plentifully as the good seed? Thus we all acknowledge that even in the soil of a youthful heart many weeds are lying dormant. And the further we advance in moral development, the more shall we experience this hereditary moral corruption, till at length we feel that there is no sin of which the germ and possibility is not within us.—*Ibid.*

[12812] "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin"—and so the human race is a fallen race. It has lost life—and inherits death.—*J. W. Bailey.*

[12813] The first parents of our race having transgressed the sole command which was given them for the trial of their obedience, instead of securing that happiness and immortality to which they were destined in their creation, became a prey to death, to a thousand evils and calamities, and to a perpetual mutability of condition. And this change in the condition of our first parents drew after it a like change in that of their posterity, as they successively came into the world; none of them being born upon the same advantageous terms, nor living in the same state of peace and tranquility, which may reasonably be supposed would have been their lot if there had never been a defection from the state of innocence.—*H. Grove*, 1740.

[12814] The fall was not the apex of all sin, but the root of all sins. The sentence pronounced was not, "Thou shalt be put to death," but, "Thou shalt die;" not an arbitrary punishment, but the necessary consequence of the transgression.—*Prof. F. Delitzsch, D.D.*

[12815] The sanction of the law was, that upon sin man should die (Gen. ii. 17). Upon this sentence Adam and all his posterity became dead in law, morally dead, or obnoxious unto death penally, and adjudged unto it. This death is intended in Rom. v. 12, and it may be also, 2 Cor. v. 14: For as Christ died, so were all dead. He died penally under the sentence of the law, and all were obnoxious unto death, or dead on that account. We are delivered from this death, not by regeneration, but by justification (Rom. viii. 1).—*J. Owen, D.D.*, 1616–1683.

[12816] There are persons who think that there is some kind of absolute mercy in God, and that, although they have sinned, yet He is ready to forgive. But this is not the character of God as drawn in the law; for the law considers Him as the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, having absolute authority to enact laws for the government of His creatures, over whom He presides with unerring justice, to see His laws carried into execution. Justice is the ruling attribute of the supreme Lawgiver. As His laws are just, so are its sanctions. It is equally just in Him to punish transgressors as to reward the obedient; for the Judge of all the earth cannot but do right and distribute impartial justice. Whether He can show mercy to the guilty is not the question, but whether He has made any provision in His law for showing them mercy: and He certainly has not. God is not described in the law as a God of mercy, but as a Sovereign Judge, whose wrath, and not whose mercy, is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.—*W. Romaine, A.M.*, 1714–1795.

(2) *Specially considered as to the doctrine of imputation.*

[12817] Whatever diversity there may exist in the opinions of theologians respecting imputation, when they come to express their own views definitely, they will yet for the most part agree that the phrase *God imputes the sin of our progenitors to their posterity*, means that *for the sins committed by our progenitors God punishes their descendants.* The term *to impute* is used in different senses. It is said of a *creditor* who charges something to his debtor as debt (*e.g.*, Phil. v. 18). It is transferred to human *judgment* when any one is punished or declared deserving of punishment. *Crime* is regarded as a *debt*, which must be cancelled partly by actual restitution and partly by punishment. This now is applied to God, who imputes sin when

He pronounces men guilty, and treats them accordingly, *i.e.*, when He actually punishes the sin of men.—*Prof. James H. Worman, A.M.*

[12818] The stronghold of the doctrine of imputation, with those who maintain the high Calvinistic sense of that tenet, is Rom. v. 12–19. The greatest difficulties with respect to this doctrine have arisen from the fact that many have treated what is said by Paul in the fifth of Romans—a passage wholly popular and anything but formally exact and didactic—in a learned and philosophical manner, and have defined terms used by him in a loose and popular way by logical and scholastic distinctions. Paul shows, in substance, that all men are regarded and punished by God as sinners, and that the ground of this lies in the act of one man; as, on the contrary, deliverance from punishment depends also upon one man, Jesus Christ. If the words of Paul are not perverted, it must be allowed that in Romans v. 12–14 he thus reasons. The cause of the universal mortality of the human race lies in Adam's transgression: he sinned, and so became mortal. Other men are regarded and treated by God as punishable because they are the posterity of Adam, the first transgressor, and consequently they too are mortal. Should it now be objected that the men who lived from Adam to Moses might themselves have personally *sinned*, and so have been punished with death on their own account, it might be answered that those who lived before the time of Moses had no express and positive law which threatened the punishment of sin, like those who lived after Moses. The positive law of Moses was not as yet given; they could not consequently be punished on account of their own transgressions, as no law was as yet given to them. Still they must die, like Adam, who transgressed a positive law. Hence their mortality must have another cause, and this is to be sought in the imputation of Adam's transgression. In the same way the ground of the justification of man lies not in himself, but in Christ, the second Adam.—*Knapp.*

[12819] Some endeavour to deduce the doctrine of imputation from the *scientia media* of God, or from his foreknowledge of what is conditionally possible. The sin of Adam, they say, is imputed to us because God foresaw that each one of us would have committed it if he had been in Adam's stead, or placed in his circumstances. Even Augustine says that the sin of Adam is imputed to us *propter consensionem*, or *consensum præsumptum*. This theory has been advanced in modern times by Reusch and Bremquell. But it is a new sort of justice which would allow us to be punished for sins which we never committed, or never designed to commit, but only might possibly have committed under certain circumstances. Think a moment how many sins we all should have committed if God had suffered us to come into circumstances of severe temptation. An innocent man might, by this rule, be punished as a murderer, because, had he lived at Paris on St. Bartholomew's night, in 1572, he might, from mistaken zeal, have killed a heretic.—*Ibid.*

[12820] The enlightened advocates of imputation do after all disclaim the actual *transfer* of Adam's sin to his posterity. They are well aware that the human mind cannot be forced up to such a point as this. But they do still urgently contend for the idea that all Adam's posterity are *punished* for his sin, although they did not in fact commit it, and that in this sense, therefore, they are all guilty of it.—*Stuart.*

II. The Reality, Significance, and Primary Manifestations of Sin.

1 The existence of sin is not merely a revealed doctrine, but an observed and universally acknowledged fact.

[12821] It is a fact of all human experience, and witnessed to as strongly by classical as by Biblical writers, as strongly by heathens and atheists as by Christians. It is no doubt true that religious men dwell more than others on the fact of man's sinfulness, but this is because they alone are able to see its importance. Sin appears in darker and therefore in truer colours in proportion as our conception of holiness becomes brighter. A man's religion may make an infinite difference in his way of feeling towards sin; but if he recognizes the facts of experience without endeavouring to explain them away, it can make no difference in his recognition of the fact of human sinfulness. The Biblical writers do not dogmatize about it, but take it as an indisputable fact: a fact which it would be as irrational and as unmeaning to call in question as the facts of disease and death.—*Joseph John Murphy.*

[12822] There is an ocean of corruption in every natural man; and as the sea receives several names from several coasts, so does this from the several parts and faculties.—*Clarkson.*

[12823] There is sin in the world. We have not any need of the Bible to tell us that. We can see it with our eyes, and hear it with our ears. We have no occasion to listen to it in sermons, and read it in books. It meets us everywhere. To tell us that the world is as it was when it came from the Creator's hand is to insult our understandings. A single newspaper, with its catalogue of crimes, scatters the foolish thought in a moment. To tell us that we are naturally disposed to what is pure and just, and holy and good, is to contradict the deepest feelings of our heart. We know that it is not so, and that, whether we are religious persons or not, we have often a hard battle with ourselves to avoid what is wrong and do what is right. No, whatever may be the origin of sin, and wherever it may have come from, no thoughtful mind can question its existence.

[12824] It is not only the Bible which tells us that all men are sinners. Our own conscience confirms it, every-day experience proves it, the voices of all nations lament it. On all sides we meet with lamentations over the unhappy discord existing in every man, between his better moral convictions and his opposing will. The saying of the Roman poet, *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*, has long been familiar, and so was another: *Nitimur in vetitum semper cupimusque negata.* There is a power of passion in man which makes his better nature powerless, and which must be restrained by law. Plutarch says: "The passions are innate in man, and have not entered him from without; and if strict discipline did not come to his assistance, man would probably be no tamer than the wildest of the beasts. And many similar testimonies might be adduced. Kant appeals to the moral power in man, and esteems the sense of duty strong enough to restrain and govern all opposing impulses; yet even he speaks of a radical evil in man, rooted in the depths of our nature, and lying beyond the resolves of our own temporal will. It may be said, the more strictly a man lives, and the more moral he is, the more he perceives this opposing power within; and the more carnestly he strives with himself, the more he has to sigh over it. But it is the Christian alone who fully knows what sin is. For it is not till the debt is forgiven that its greatness is recognized, nor till the conflict with sin is begun that its power and tyranny are experienced. But a feeling which at least approximates to this heavy sorrow, this consciousness of guilt, exists also apart from Christianity. . . . In the ancient world a consciousness of sin was not wholly wanting. The lower its morality sank, the more decidedly was this expressed. "We are all wicked," says Seneca; "what one man blames in another, each will find in his own bosom. We, being ourselves wicked, live among the wicked."—*Luthardt.*

2 The direct significance of sin resolves itself into persistent enmity against and antagonism to God.

[12825] The sinful as much neglect and slight the blessed God, or decline to be concerned with Him, as if they denied all the things of Him which His idea contains; or as if they affirmed all the things of Him which it most directly excludes. They shun, they fly from Him, as if they thought Him the worst of beings, while they acknowledge Him the best and most excellent good; disobey and affront Him, as if they thought He had no right to rule them, while they confess Him the sovereign Lord of all the world; and steer their course both towards Him and one another, in as direct repugnancy to His rules as if they thought them all reversed; and that the most opposite system of laws and precepts were given them by some undoubted authority to regulate all their practice!—*J. Howe*, 1695.

3 The first manifestations of the sinful nature come with the dawn of self-consciousness.

[12826] Self-consciousness is not a mere synonym of consciousness. The first or primary consciousness is consciousness of sensation: self-consciousness is secondary, and may be defined as consciousness of consciousness. Thought is generally though not always conscious, but it is not necessarily self-conscious: thought becomes self-conscious when it becomes its own object, that is to say, when we think about thinking. Pleasure and pain are not necessarily self-conscious, though they tend to become so: nor is there necessarily any self-consciousness in the desire of immediately attainable pleasure, or the dread of immediately threatening pain (feelings which the higher animals appear to have in equal intensity with ourselves); but all brooding over recollected or anticipated pleasure or pain is self-conscious. Self-consciousness appears to have the closest connection with that power of directing thought at will, whereon depends the power of forming abstractions and of abstract reasoning; and these latter are the distinctive characteristics of man's intellect as compared with that of the animals. But while self-consciousness and the power of directing thought at will are on the one side the source of all high intellectual and moral developments, they give on the other side entrance to all error and sin. The fundamental law whereon the development of original sin depends, is this: that any function is liable to be in some degree deranged by the direction thereto of self-consciousness, so as to make it an object of thought. This law has its root in the organic life, farther down than the first development of a moral nature; thus the act of breathing is disturbed and becomes irregular if we think about it; and I believe it is an admitted fact that the bodily health is injured by making it the object of constant thought. And if this is true of the bodily functions, it is much more so of the mental ones, which are more susceptible of modification as the result of circumstances, and more liable to spontaneous variations than the bodily functions, and for those reasons more liable to morbid perversions. —*Joseph John Murphy.*

III. The Connection between Sin and Suffering.

1 Suffering, as an outcome of sin, is necessitated by the very nature of things, and is according to the Divine law of good and evil.

[12827] Your dull inebriate, who sears his brain by the habit of intemperance, thinks that after his reformation his nervous system will slowly recover all the soundness it once had. But in your finger a scar will not grow out; and on your brain a scar will not grow out! We carry into our graves the marks of boyhood's sports; and this is as true of the sports that

scar the brain, as of those that gash the fingers. —*Rev. Joseph Cook.*

[12828] It is not that the wickedness of men can hurt Him, that His throne is in any danger of being shaken by their combinations, or that His treasures may be exhausted if His subjects do not pay what they owe Him ; it is not from any such emotion as personal injury excites in our breast ; but it is because His laws are founded on the essential difference between good and evil ; because they are adapted with wisdom and goodness to the circumstances of those to whom they are given, and because the happiness of the whole rational creation depends upon the observance of them, that guilt, under the Divine government, is followed by punishment.—*Dr. Hill.*

[12829] Punishment is not the effect of the mere arbitrary will and appointment of God, but arises from the very nature of law. If there be a law, there must be penalties attached to it. And hence it is that the justice and truth of God are concerned in putting these penalties into execution. God is just, and His justice requires that He should render to every man according to his works. God is true, and His truth requires that His threatenings as well as His promises should be fulfilled. God being the moral Ruler and Governor of His intelligent creatures, the punishment due to the transgression of His law is the necessary effect of the Divine righteousness, justice, and truth.—*Paton J. Gloag, D.D.*

a As guilt is inseparable from sin, so sorrow and suffering are inseparable from guilt.

[12830] "Tribulation and anguish," says the apostle, "upon every soul of man that doeth evil." The sentence is universal, and we find no reserve or exempt case in the execution. And therefore let that man, who can be so far taken and transported with the present pleasing offers of a temptation, as to overlook those dreadful after-claps which usually bring up the rear of it; let him, I say, take heed, that vengeance does not begin with him in this life, and mark him in the forehead with some fearful unlooked-for disaster. And if this once comes to be the case, I cannot see but that those high blades, who pretend to outbrave hell, and laugh at all apprehensions of future misery, yet, when they come to feel the hand of God upon their worldly interests, can as sadly and sharply resent the calamity of a languishing body or a declining family, a blasted name or a broken estate, and bend under it as poorly as the meanest and lowest spirited man whatsoever. But let them bear it as they can ; such for the most part are the dolorous effects and bitter appendages of a prevailing temptation. After all which, if pardoning mercy should come in, and save a man at the last, yet surely no serious, considering person would need any greater argument against the commission of a sin, than to have these the circumstances of its pardon.—*R. South, D.D.*, 1633–1716.

IV. God, in Relation to Human Sin.

1 Reasons for the permitted existence of evil.

[12831] If evil be antagonistic to God, how can God, at once almighty and all-holy, have allowed it to exist ? As all-holy, He must abhor it ; as almighty, He surely might have proscribed what He abhors. The answer is, that notwithstanding the inherent quality of evil, the possibility of its existence is, so far as we can see, a needful condition of true moral freedom. God might have created a universe ruled from first to last by physical law, and so incapable of deviation from the true rule of its action. In such a universe moral evil would have found no place, only because there would have been no creatures properly capable of moral good. Our experience tells us that God has not chosen to stint down His creative activity to these proportions ; that we are free agents is not more a matter of faith than experience. We know that God has created beings whose high privilege it is to be able freely to choose Him as their King, as the accepted Master of their whole inward life. But if this privilege is to be real, it also carries with it the implied power of rejecting Him. The alternative risk is the inevitable condition of the consummate honour ; it is actually a substantial part of the honour. A moral being must at least have a capacity for disobedience if he is to be able freely to obey.—*Canon Liddon.*

[12832] There is no morality or immorality where there is no choice or freedom : consequently were the actions of men under an absolute control, they would no more be answerable for their doings than a clock is for its motions : and therefore to call on God to make all things work by immediate interposition of His power, for the present reward of virtue and punishment of vice, is a request not consistent with itself; it is desiring God to do that for the sake of virtue, which would destroy virtue, and leave no room for the exercise of it, no ground on which to distinguish it from vice and iniquity. —*Bp. Sherlock*, 1678–1761.

V. The Enfeebled Condition of Fallen Man.

1 Sin makes powerless the soul for God's service, and renders man of himself morally incapable.

[12833] As long as a man continues an instrument of God's glory, so long his title to life and happiness stands sure, and no longer. But now, sin in Scripture, and in God's account, is the death of the soul ; Eph. ii. 1 : "We were dead in trespasses and sins." Now death makes a thing utterly useless, because it renders it totally inactive ; and in things that are naturally active, that which deprives them of their action, bereaves them of their use. The soul, by reason of sin, is unable to act spiritually ; for sin has disordered the soul, and turned the force and edge of all its operations against God : so that now

it can bring no glory to God by doing, but only by suffering, and being made miserable. It is now unfit to obey His commands, and fit only to endure His strokes. It is incapable, by any active communion or converse with Him, to enjoy His love, and a proper object only to bear His anger and revenge.—*R. South, D.D.*, 1633–1716.

[12834] Human life and its history are full of contradictions which are essentially of a moral kind; contradictions in the inner life, between demand and supply, between resolution and accomplishment; contradictions in the outer life, such as the never-ending conflict between truth and falsehood, the injustice of external circumstances, &c. Of these contradictions there is no other explanation than the primitive fact of that rupture of life into two discordant elements, by which the moral world was put out of joint. . . . No better moral knowledge, as Socrates thought, no advance in civilization, as is now thought, can avail here. For even the best knowledge and most exalted wisdom are powerless when opposed to the inclinations of the heart; and with the development of the mental faculties there is also the development of evil. As is the case in an individual, so is it also in the history of mankind. Civilization and culture may alter the form of sin, but cannot lessen its tyranny or destroy its existence. Culture can put art in the place of naturalness. The sins then practised are the sins of culture—more refined, indeed, but not fewer, and often increased in number, and aggravated in quality. Nothing, then, that is generated by man's own mental powers can avail us here; but God must introduce into mankind and its affairs, and oppose to the power of sin another and superior power.—*Luthardt.*

2 Sin severs from God, and darkens man's spiritual perceptions.

[12835] Sin is the greatest and highest infelicity of the creature, depraves the soul within itself, vitiates its powers, deforms its beauty, extinguishes its light, corrupts its purity, darkens its glory, disturbs its tranquility and peace, violates its harmonious, joyful state and order, and destroys its very life. It disaffects it to God, severs it from Him, engages His justice and influences His wrath against it.—*J. Howe*, 1630–1705.

[12836] 1. Men in the dark cannot discern colours; so in the state of nature they cannot discern between morality and grace; they take one for the other, *pro dea nubem.* 2. In the dark the greatest beauty is hid. Let there be rare flowers in the garden, and pictures in the room, yet in the dark their beauty is vailed over; so, though there be such transcendent beauty in Christ as amazeth the angels, a man in the state of nature sees none of this beauty. What is Christ to him, or heaven to him? the *vail is upon his heart.—J. Watson*, 1692.

[See Section XIV., "SINS."]

PART IV.

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

	PAGE
DIVISION A.—DIVINE PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE REDEMPTION OF MAN ...	391
DIVISION B.—THE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION GENERALLY CONSIDERED	402
DIVISION C.—THE SPECIAL ACTS AND DECREES OF GOD THE FATHER IN REDEMPTION ...	435
DIVISION D.—THE WORK AND OFFICE OF GOD THE SON IN REDEMPTION	491

PART IV.

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

DIVISION A.

DIVINE PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE REDEMPTION OF MAN.

SYLLABUS.

	PAGE
I. The Divine Promise to Adam, and through Adam to the World at Large, of Mercy in Condemnation	391
II. The Choice of a Peculiar People	392
III. The Covenants	393

PART IV.

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

DIVISION A.

DIVINE PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE REDEMPTION OF MAN.

I. The Divine Promise to Adam, and through Adam to the World at Large, of Mercy in Condemnation.

[12837] The fatal sentence which doomed our first parents and all their posterity to suffering and death was tempered, however, by the blessed promise that mercy was to arrest the full execution of the penalty—that the woman should give birth to a seed which should bruise the serpent's head; in other words, should have an offspring by and in whom the evil now introduced should be again abolished, and the author of the evil himself crushed in his dominion. The promise undoubtedly implied a spiritual victory—deliverance not simply from the effects of the fall, but also from the sin and guilt in which the essence of the evil and the triumph of the tempter really stood, so that the promised reversion of the evil necessarily carried redemption, in the higher sense, in its bosom. And on the ground of the redemption thus dimly indicated in the first promise, the Lord gave the fallen pair a real clothing—a clothing of skins derived from slain victims, and fitted to serve as a suitable covering for their bodies, because the sacrifice of the animal life had already been taken as a covering for their guilt.—*Philip Henry Gosse, F.R.S.*

[12838] No sooner had man fallen than started forth the grand promise—that promise of promise, that promise which contains all other promises; and this before one cry for mercy was uttered—before one tear of real penitence fell. It burst forth from the long-suffering of God.—*J. H. Evans*, 1849.

[12839] God, in His infinite mercy, did not leave man to perish in his sin. He was indeed driven forth from Paradise, for which he was no longer fit. But, before that, God had pronounced the curse upon his tempter, Satan, and had given man the precious promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent; that is, that our blessed Saviour, "born of a woman," should redeem us from the power of sin and of death, through His own obedience, death, and resurrection. And even the labour of his hands, to which man was now doomed, was in the circumstances a boon. Therefore, when our first parents left the garden of Eden, it was not without hope, nor into outer darkness. They carried with them the promise of a Redeemer, the assurance of the final defeat of the great enemy, as well as the Divine institution of a Sabbath on which to worship, and of the marriage-bond by which to be joined together into families. Thus the foundations of the Christian life in all its bearings were laid in Paradise.

There are still other points of practical interest to be gathered up. The descent of all mankind from our first parents determines our spiritual relationship to Adam. In Adam all have sinned and fallen. But, on the other hand, it also determines our spiritual relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ, as the second Adam, which rests on precisely the same grounds. For "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," and "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." The descent of all mankind from one common stock has in times past been questioned by some, although Scripture expressly teaches that "He has made of one blood all nations, for to dwell on the face of the earth." It is remarkable that this denial, which certainly never was shared by the most competent men of science, has quite lately been, we may say, almost universally, abandoned, and the original unity of the human race in their common descent is now a generally accepted fact.—*Edersheim, D.D.*

[12840] The whole human race shall not be

the prey of the devil. To the seed of the serpent the Lord opposes the seed of the woman, which includes not only all the redeemed, but more especially the great representative of fallen and delivered humanity, the second Adam, the Redeemer of the world Himself. Promised in Eden, announced to the patriarchs, predicted by the prophets, He is born of a virgin, He comes to repair the ravages of sin by making an expiation for it, and to destroy the kingdom of darkness by triumphing over it on the cross. Under this glorious Captain, anticipated or received by faith, is gathered, in all generations, a people, the children of the Most High, "who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Delivered from the condemnation of sin, and from the influence of him who for too long a time had deceived them, reinstated, according to their original destination, in the favour of God, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, they show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light." Such is the seed of the woman which God opposes to the seed of the serpent: Christ, born of a woman, clothed with human nature, and that redeemed people of which He is the Head, the first-born.—*Rev. W. Hare.*

II. The Choice of a Peculiar People.

[12841] Chosen—singled out from others to some honourable service or station. Chosen warriors are such as are picked out as the most valiant and skilful in an army, or as best adapted to some special and momentous enterprise. The Hebrew nation was a "chosen" people, God having set them apart to receive His Word and preserve His worship (Psa. cv. 43; Deut. vii. 7).—*Eden.*

III. The Covenants.

1 Application of the term.

(1) *Properly, of a covenant between man and man.*

[12842] A solemn compact or agreement, either between tribes or nations (1 Sam. xi. 1; Josh. ix. 6, 15), or between individuals (Gen. xxi. 44), by which each party bound himself to fulfil certain conditions, and was assured of receiving certain advantages. In making such a covenant God was solemnly invoked as a witness (Gen. xxxi. 50), whence the expression, "a covenant of Jehovah," . . . and accordingly a breach of covenant was regarded as a very heinous sin. A sign, or witness of the covenant, was sometimes framed, such as a gift (Gen. xxi. 30), or a pillar, or heap of stones erected (Gen. xxxi. 52). The marriage compact is called "the covenant of God" (Prov. ii. 17). The word "covenant" came to be applied to a sure ordinance, such as that of the shewbread (Lev. xxiv. 8), and is used figuratively in such expressions as a covenant with death (Isa. xxviii. 18), or with the wild beasts (Hos. ii. 18). The phrases "lords or men of one's covenant" are employed to denote confederacy (Gen. xiv. 7).—*Kitto.*

(2) *Improperly, of a covenant between God and man.*

[12843] Man not being in any way in the position of an independent covenanting party, the phrase is evidently used by way of accommodation. Strictly speaking, such a covenant is quite unconditional, and amounts to a promise . . . or act of mere favour (Psa. lxxxix. 28) . . . on God's part. . . . Consistently with the representation of God's dealing with man under the form of a covenant, such covenant is said to be confirmed in conformity with human custom by an oath (Deut. iv. 31; Psa. lxxxix. 3), to be sanctioned by curses to fall on the unfaithful (Deut. xxix. 21). Hence, in Scripture, the covenant of God is called His "oath," His "counsel," His "promise," . . . and it is described as wholly consisting in the gracious bestowal of blessing on men (Isa. lix. 21; Jer. xxxi. 33, 34). Hence also the application of the term "covenant" to designate such fixed arrangements or laws of nature as the regular succession of day and night (Jer. xxxiii. 20), and such religious institutions as the Sabbath (Exod. xxxi. 16), circumcision (Gen. xvii. 9, 10), the Levitical institute (Lev. xxvi. 15), and, in general, any precept or ordinance of God (Jer. xxxiv. 13, 14), all such appointments forming part of that system or arrangement in connection with which the blessings of God's grace were to be enjoyed.—*Ibid.*

2 The Noahic covenant.

(1) *Its import and significance to man.*

a. The more sacred and elevated position of the earth itself.

[12844] In one respect the world seemed to have suffered material loss by the visitation of the Deluge. Along with the agents and instruments of evil, there had also been swept away by it the emblems of grace and hope—paradise with its tree of life and its cherubim of glory. . . . An important link of communion with heaven, it might well have seemed, was broken by the change thus brought through the Deluge on the world. But the loss was soon fully compensated, and, we may even say, more than compensated, by the advantages conferred on Noah and his seed from the higher relation to which they were now raised, in respect to God and the world. . . . The new condition of the earth itself immediately appears in the freedom allowed and practised in regard to the external worship of God. This was no longer confined to any single region, as seems to have been the case in the age subsequent to the Fall. The cherubims were located in a particular spot, on the east of the garden of Eden; and as the symbols of God's presence were there, it was only natural that the celebration of Divine worship should there also have found its common centre. Hence the two sons of Adam are

said to have "*brought* their offerings unto the Lord"— which can scarcely be understood otherwise than as pointing to that particular locality which was hallowed by visible symbols of the Lord's presence, and in the neighbourhood of which life and blessing still lingered. In like manner it is said of Cain, after he had assumed the attitude of rebellion, that "he went out from the presence of the Lord," obviously implying that there was a certain region with which the Divine presence was considered to be more peculiarly connected, and which can be thought of nowhere else than in that sanctuary on the east of Eden.—*Patrick Fairbairn, D.D.*

[12845] While paradise was still on earth, men probably turned towards it as the place whence Jehovah held intercourse with man. But when its site was swept away in the flood, God, as it were, took up His throne in heaven, and from thence revealed Himself unto men and held intercourse with them. And the truth, that our hearts and prayers must rise upwards to Him who is in heaven, was symbolized by the altar on which the sacrifice was laid. Scripture significantly adds, that "Jehovah smelled a sweet savour," or rather "a savour of rest," "of satisfaction;" in other words, He accepted the sacrifice. "And Jehovah said in His heart," that is, He resolved, "I will not again curse the ground for man's sake, for (or because) the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Both Luther and Calvin have remarked on the circumstance that men's universal sinfulness, which formerly had been the cause of the judgment of the flood, should now be put forward as the reason for not again cursing the ground. But in fact this only marks another difference between the state of man before and after the flood. If we may so say, God now admitted the fact of universal sinfulness as existing, and made it an element of His future government. He looked upon man as a miserable and wretched sinner, with whom in His compassion and longsuffering He would bear, delaying His second and final judgment till after He should have accomplished all that He had promised to do for the salvation of men. Putting aside Israel, as God's special people, the period between Noah and Christ may be described, in the words of St. Paul, as "the times of this ignorance" which "God winked at," or as those when "through the forbearance of God" sins were passed over.—*Edersheim, D.D.*

[12846] With the flood the reason for any restriction as to worship vanished. Noah, therefore, reared his altar, and presented his sacrifice to the Lord where the ark rested. There immediately he obtained the blessing, and entered into covenant with God—proving that, in a sense, old things had passed away, and all had become new. The earth had risen in the Divine reckoning to a higher condition; it had passed through the baptism of water, and was now, in a manner, cleansed from defilement; so that every place had become sacred, and might be regarded as suitable for the most solemn acts of worship. This position of the earth after the Deluge appears, further, in the express repeal of the curse originally laid upon the ground for the sin of Adam: "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake" (Gen. viii. 21), was the word of God to Noah on accepting the first offering presented to Him in the purified earth. It is no doubt to be understood relatively—not as indicating a total repeal of the evil, but only a mitigation of it; yet such a mitigation as would render the earth a much less afflicted and more fertile region than it had been before. But this again indicated that, in the estimation of heaven, the earth had now assumed a new position; that by the action of God's judgment upon it, it had become hallowed in His sight, and was in a condition to receive tokens of the Divine beneficence which had formerly been withheld from it.—*Patrick Fairbairn, D.D.*

b. The heirship of the new world given to Noah and his seed as the children of faith.

[12847] "He is made heir," as it is written in Hebrews, "of the righteousness which is by faith"—heir, that is, of all that properly belongs to such righteousness, not merely of the righteousness itself, but also of the world, which in the Divine purpose it was destined to possess and occupy. Hence, as if there had been a new creation, and a new head brought in to exercise over it the right of sovereignty, the original blessing and grant to Adam are substantially renewed to Noah and his family: "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. And the fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea: into your hand are they delivered." Here, then, the righteousness of faith received direct from the grace of God the dowry that had been originally bestowed upon the righteousness of nature—not a blessing merely, but a blessing coupled with the heirship and dominion of the world. There was nothing strange or arbitrary in such a proceeding; it was in perfect accordance with the great principles of the Divine administration. Adam was too closely connected with the sin that destroyed the world to be invested, even when he had become through faith a partaker of grace, with the restored heirship of the world. Nor had the world itself passed through such an ordeal of purification, as to fit it in the personal lifetime of Adam, or of his more immediate offspring, for being at all represented in the light of an inheritance of blessing. The renewed title to the heirship of its fulness was properly reserved to the time when, by the great act of Divine judgment at the Deluge, it had passed into a new condition; and when one was found of the woman's seed, who had attained in a peculiar degree to the righteousness

of faith, and along with the world had undergone a process of salvation.—*Ibid.*

[12848] It was precisely such a person as Noah that should have been chosen as the first type of the righteousness of faith, in respect to its world-wide heritage of blessing. And having been raised to this higher position, an additional sacredness was thrown around him and his seed; the fear of him was to be put into the inferior creatures; their life was to be avenged of every one that should wrongfully take it; even the life-blood of irrational animals was to be held sacred, because of its having something in common with man's, while their flesh was now freely surrendered to their use; the whole evidently fitted, and, we cannot doubt, also intended to convey the idea that man had by the special gift of God's grace been again constituted heir and lord of the world; that, in the words of the Psalmist, "the earth had been given to the children of men," and given in a larger and fuller sense than had been done since the period of the Fall.—*Ibid.*

[12849] Adam, at his creation, was constituted the lord of this world, and had kingly power and authority given him to subdue it and rule over it. But, on the occasion of his fall, this grant, though not formally recalled, suffered a capital abridgment; since he was sent forth from Eden as a discrowned monarch, to do the part simply of a labourer on the surface of the earth, and with the discouraging assurance that it should reluctantly yield to him of its fruitfulness. Nor, when he afterwards so distinctly identified himself with God's promise and purpose of grace by appearing as the head only of that portion of his seed who had faith in God, did there seem any alleviation of the evil; the curse that rested on the ground rested on it still, even for the seed of blessing (Gen. v. 29); and not they, but the ungodly Cainites, acquired in it the ascendency of physical force and political dominion. A change, however, appears in the relative position of things when the flood had swept with its purifying waters over the earth. Man now rises, in the person of Noah, to a higher place in the world; yet not simply as man, but as a child of God, standing in faith. His faith had saved him, amid the general wreck of the old world, to become in the new a second head of mankind, and an inheritor of earth's domain, as now purged and rescued from the pollution of evil.—*Ibid.*

c. The pledge of continuance given in the covenant confirmed by a fixed sign in the heavens.

[12850] The fitness of the rainbow to serve as a sign of the covenant made with Noah is all that could be desired. There is an exact correspondence between the natural phenomenon it presents and the moral use to which it is applied. The promise in the covenant was not that there should be no future visitations of judgment upon the earth, but that they should not proceed to the extent of again destroying the world. In the moral as in the natural sphere there might still be congregating vapours and descending torrents: indeed the terms of the covenant imply that there should be such, and that by means of them God would not fail to testify His displeasure against sin, and keep in awe the workers of iniquity. But there should be no second deluge to diffuse universal ruin; mercy should always so far rejoice against judgment. And so precisely it is in nature with the rainbow, which is formed by the lustre of the sun's rays, shining on the dark cloud as it recedes; so that it may fitly be called, in the somewhat poetical language of Langé, "the sun's triumph over the floods: the glitter of his beams imprinted on the rain-cloud as a mark of subjection." How appropriate an emblem of the action of Divine grace always returning after wrath! Grace still sparing and preserving even when clouds of judgment have been threatening to desolate and destroy! And as the rainbow throws its radiant arch over the expanse between heaven and earth, and as with a wreath of beauty unites the two together again, after they have been engaged in an elemental war, it strikingly images to the thoughtful eye the essential harmony that is still to subsist between the higher and the lower spheres. Such undoubtedly is its symbolic import, as the sign peculiarly connected with the Noahic covenant; it holds out by means of its very form and nature an assurance of God's mercy, as engaged to keep perpetually in check the floods of deserved wrath, and continue to the world the manifestation of His grace and goodness. Such also is the import attached to it, when forming a part of prophetic imagery in the visions of Ezekiel (ch. i. 28) and of St. John (Rev. iv. 3); it is the symbol of grace, as ever ready to return after judgment, and to stay the evil from proceeding so far as to accomplish a complete destruction.—*Ibid.*

[12851] Gracious as this covenant with Noah was, and appropriate and beautiful the sign that ratified it, all bore on it still the stamp of imperfection: they were an indication and a prelude of the better things needed to make man truly and permanently blessed, not these things themselves. For what was this new world which had its perpetuity secured, and over which Noah was set to reign, as heir of the righteousness that is by faith? To Noah himself, and each one in succession of his seed, it was still a region of corruption and death. It had been sanctified, indeed, by the judgment of God, and as thus sanctified it was not to perish again as it had done before. But this sanctification was only by water—enough to sweep away into the gulf of perdition the mass of impurity that festered on its surface, but not penetrating inwards to the elements of evil which were bound up with its very framework. Another agency, more thoroughly pervasive in its nature, and in its effects more nobly sublimating, the agency of fire, is required to purge out the dross of its

earthliness, and render it a home and an inheritance fit for those who are made like to the Son of God (2 Pet. iii. 7–13).—*Ibid.*

3 The Abrahamic covenant.

(1) *Its special nature and significance.*

a. The promise of Christ through the descendants of Abraham conveyed in the comprehensive grandeur of the blessing pronounced on him and, through him, on all the nations of the world.

[12852] Jehovah from the first made Himself known to Abraham as his God, nay, even took the name of "God of Abraham" as a distinctive epithet, and made the promise, "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee," a leading article in the covenant established with him. And as the peculiar blessing of Shem was to be held with no exclusive design, but that the sons of Japheth, far and wide, might share in it, so Abraham is called, not only to be himself blessed, but also that he might be a blessing—a blessing to such an extent that those should be blessed who blessed him, and in him all the families of the earth should be blessed. Yet with this general similarity between the earlier and the later announcement, what a striking advance does the Divine plan now make in breadth of meaning and explicitness of purpose! How wonderfully does it combine together the little and the great, the individual and the universal! Its *terminus a quo*, the son of a Mesopotamian shepherd, and its *terminus ad quem*, the entire brotherhood of humanity, and the round circumference of the globe! What a Divine-like grasp and comprehensiveness! The very projection of such a scheme bespoke the infinite understanding of Godhead; and minds altogether the reverse of narrow and exclusive, minds attempered to noble aims and inspired by generous feeling alone could carry it into execution.—*Ibid.*

[12853] Abraham was raised to a very singular pre-eminence, and constituted in a manner the root and centre of the world's future history, as concerns the attainment of real blessing. Still, even in that respect, not exclusively. The blessing was to come chiefly to Abraham and through him; but as clearly indicated also in the prophecy on Shem, others were to stand, though in a subordinate rank, on the same line; since those also were to be blessed who blessed him; that is, who held substantially the same faith, and occupied the same friendly relation to God. The cases of such persons in the patriarch's own day, as his kinsman Lot, who was not formally admitted into Abraham's covenant, and still more of Melchisedek, who was not even of Abraham's line, and yet individually stood in some sense higher than Abraham himself, clearly showed, and were no doubt partly provided for the express purpose of showing, that there was nothing arbitrary in Abraham's position, and that the ground he occupied was to a certain extent common to believers generally. The peculiar honour conceded to him was that the great trunk of blessing was to be of him, while only some isolated twigs or scattered branches were to be found elsewhere; and even those could only be found by persons coming in a manner to make common cause with him. In regard to himself, however, the large dowry of good conveyed to him in the Divine promise could manifestly not be realized through himself personally. There could at the most be but a beginning made in his own experience and history; and the widening of the circle of blessing to other kindreds and regions, till it reached the most distant families of the earth, could only be effected by means of those who were to spring from him. Hence the original word of promise, which was "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," was afterwards changed into this, "in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xxii. 18). —*Ibid.*

[12854] The good promised neither did nor could have come into realization but by a personal commingling of the Divine with the human; and that it has become capable of reaching to the most exalted height, and of diffusing itself through the widest bounds, simply by reason of this union in Christ. He therefore is the essential kernel of the promise; and the seed of Abraham, rather than Abraham himself, was to have the honour of blessing all the families of the earth. This, however, by no means makes void the *in thee* of the original promise; for by so expressly connecting the good with Abraham, as well as with his seed, the organic connection was marked between the one and the other, and the things that belonged to him were made known as the beginning of the end. The blessing to be brought to the world through his line had even in his time a present though small realization—precisely as the kingdom of Christ had its commencement in that of David, and the one ultimately merged in the other. And so in Abraham, as the living root of all that was to follow, the whole and every part may be said to take its rise; and not only was Christ after the flesh of the seed of Abraham, but each believer in Christ is a son of Abraham, and the entire company of the redeemed shall have their place and their portion with Abraham in the kingdom of God.—*Ibid.*

(2) *Instruction conveyed in its history.*

a. In regard to the subjects and channels of blessing.

[12855] Even with the advantage on the side of righteousness gained by the terrific judgment of the Deluge, the same sinful tendencies soon began to develop themselves anew after that event; within a few generations the miracle at Babel was necessary to confound the projects of men, combining in one vast scheme to thwart the purposes of heaven; and even the posterity of Shem, which had some kind of general distinction conferred on it in Divine things by the prophecy of Noah, was ready to be engulfed in

the swelling stream of pollution. . . . It was necessary, therefore, to adopt another course, and, for the sake of the general good of the world, to select a particular channel of blessing. This is the principle of the Divine government of which Abraham became the first living representative—individual election to special privileges, hopes, and obligations; primarily, indeed, for the behoof of those more immediately concerned, but remotely, also, for the benefit of others, nay, with the express object and design that the particular in this respect might become the universal.—*Philip Henry Gosse, F.R.S.*

[12856] The godly seed that was to issue from the covenant by the special agency of God must not be expected otherwise than as the fruit of a godly parentage; and hence the postponement of the generation of Isaac till Abraham had not only attained to the higher degrees of excellence, but had also received the rite of circumcision, the symbol of a purified condition. It was then only that the powers of nature were miraculously vivified for the production of the promised seed; and so the child born . . . was the proper type of what the covenant aimed at, and what the symbolical ordinance connected with it indicated—namely, a spiritual seed, in which the Divine and human, grace and nature, should meet together in producing true subjects and channels of blessing. In the Lord Jesus Christ these elements were to meet in their highest degree and most perfect form—not in co-operative merely, but in organic union; and the result consequently was, one in whom perfection was realized, at once the heir and dispenser of all blessings. But the same things had, in a measure, to be formed in the real children of the covenant of every age, and those in whom they were not might indeed be *of* Israel, but they could not be *the* Israel.—*Ibid.*

[12857] The high surrender of the human to the Divine, and holy self-consecration to the will and service of God, was beyond all doubt like the other things recorded in Abraham's life, of the nature of a revelation. It was not intended to terminate in the patriarch and his son, but in them as the sacred roots of the covenant people, to show in outward and corporeal representation what in spirit ought to be perpetually repeating itself in their individual and collective history. It proclaimed to them through all their generations that the covenant required of its members lives of unshrinking and devoted application to the service of God—yielding to no weak misgivings or corrupt solicitations of the flesh—staggering at no difficulties presented by the world, and also that it rendered such a course possible by the ground and scope it afforded for the exercise of faith in the sustaining grace and might of God. And, undoubtedly, as the human here was the reflex of the Divine, whence it drew its source and reason, so inversely, and as regards the ulterior objects of the covenant, the Divine might justly be regarded as imaged in the human. An organic union between the two was indispensable to the effectual accomplishment of the promised good; and the seed in which the blessing of heaven was to concentrate, and from which it was to flow throughout the families of the earth, must on the one side be as really the Son of God, as on the other He was to be the offspring of Abraham.—*Patrick Fairbairn, D.D.*

[12858] What appears to be taught in the historical revelations of God connected with the establishment of the covenant is also perpetually re-echoed in the later communications of the prophets. Their great aim, in the monitory part of their writings, is to bring home to men's minds the conviction that the covenant had pre-eminently in view moral ends, and that in so far as the people degenerated from these, they failed in respect to the main design of their calling.—*Ibid.*

[12859] What a succession of lessons . . . were given to the children of the covenant in regard to what constituted their greatest danger—lessons stretching through four generations—ever varying in their precise form, yet always bearing most directly and impressively upon the same point—writing out on the very foundations of their history, and emblazoning on the banner of their covenant the important truth, that the spiritual element was ever to be held the thing of first and most essential moment, and that the natural was only to be regarded as the channel through which the other was chiefly to come, and the safeguard by which it was to be fenced and kept! From the first the call of God made itself known as no merely outward distinction; and the covenant that grew out of it, instead of being but a formal bond of interconnection between its members and God, was framed especially to meet the spiritual evil in the world, and required as an indispensable condition a sanctified heart in all who were to experience its blessings, and to work out its beneficent results. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? How could the spiritual Jehovah, who has, from the first creation of man upon the earth, been ever manifesting Himself as the Holy One, and directing His administration so as to promote the ends of righteousness, enter into a covenant of life and blessing on any other principle? It is impossible—as impossible as it is for the unchangeable God to act contrary to His nature, that the covenant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the covenant of grace and blessing, which embraces in its bosom Christ Himself, and the benefits of His eternal redemption—could ever have contemplated as its real members any but spiritual and righteous persons. And the whole tenor and current of the Divine dealings in establishing the covenant seem to have been alike designed and calculated to shut up every thoughtful mind to the conclusion that none but such could either fulfil its higher purposes or have an interest in its more essential provisions.—*Ibid.*

b. In regard to the inheritance destined for possession.

[12860] If the inheritance was promised in a way which from the very first implied a resurrection from the dead before it could be rightly enjoyed, and if all along, even when Canaan was possessed by the seed of Abraham, the men of faith still looked forward to another inheritance, when the curse should be utterly abolished, the blessing fully received, and death finally swallowed up in victory, then a twofold boon must have been conveyed to Abraham and his seed under the promise of the land of Canaan: one to be realized in the natural, and the other in the resurrection state—a mingled and temporary good before, and a complete and permanent one after, the restitution of all things by the Messiah. So that, in regard to the ultimate designs of God, the land of Canaan would serve much the same purpose as the garden of Eden, with its tree of life and cherubim of glory—the same, and yet more—for it not only presented to the eye of faith a type, but also gave in its possession an earnest of the inheritance of a paradisiacal world. The difference, however, is not essential, and only indicates an advance in God's revelations and purposes of grace, making what was ultimately designed for the faithful more sure to them by an instalment, through a singular train of providential arrangements, in a present inheritance of good. They thus enjoyed a real and substantial pledge of the better things to come, which were to be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.—*Ibid.*

[12861] What were those better things themselves which were to come? What was thus indicated to Abraham and his believing posterity, as their coming inheritance of good? If it was clear that they must have attained to the resurrection from the dead before they could properly enjoy the possession, it could not be Canaan in its natural state as a region of the present earth that was to be inherited. For that, considered as the abode of Abraham and all his elect posterity, when raised from the tomb and collected into an innumerable multitude, must have appeared of far too limited dimensions, as well as of unsuitable character. Though it might well seem a vast inheritance for any living generation that should spring from the loins of Abraham, yet it was palpably inadequate for the possession of his collected seed, when it should have become like the stars of heaven for multitude. And not only so, but as the risen body is to be, not a natural but a glorified one, the inheritance it is to occupy must be a glorified one too.—*Ibid.*

[12862] The fairest portions of the earth, in its present fallen and corruptible state, could be a fit possession for men only so long as in their persons they are themselves fallen and corruptible. When redeemed from the power of the grave, and entered on the glories of the new creation, the natural Canaan will be as unfit to be their proper home and possession as the original Eden would have been with its tree of life. . . . The ultimate inheritance destined for Abraham and the heirs of promise, which was to become theirs after the resurrection from the dead, must be as much higher and better than anything which the earth, in its present state, can furnish, as man's nature when glorified shall be higher and better than it is while in bondage to sin and death.—*Ibid.*

[12863] What that final rest or inheritance, which forms the antitype to Canaan, really is, we may gather from the words of the apostle concerning it in Eph. i. 14, where he calls the Spirit "the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased inheritance." . . . Now, whatever the inheritance or possession may be in itself, and whatever the region where it is to be enjoyed, when it is spoken of as needing to be redeemed, we are evidently taught to regard it as something that has been alienated from us, but is again to be made ours; not a possession altogether new, but an old possession lost, and again to be reclaimed from the powers of evil which now overmaster and destroy it. So was it certainly with our persons. They were sold under sin. With our loss of righteousness before God, we lost at the same time our spiritual freedom, and all that essentially belonged to the pure and blessed life, in the possession of which we were created. Instead of this we became subject to the tyrannous dominion of the prince of darkness, holding us captive in our souls to the foul and wretched bondage of sin, and in our bodies to the mortality and corruption of death. The redemption of our persons is past their recovery from this lost and ruinous state, to the freedom of God's children, and the blessedness of immortal life in His presence and glory.—*Ibid.*

4 The Mosaic covenant.

(1) *Its nature.*

a. As a covenant conditioned by law.

[12864] The covenant of law ratified at Mount Sinai, and grafted on the earlier covenant of promise, reversed, in one respect, the relation of things: it gave special prominence to the obligations laid upon the people, and threw more into the background the purposes of mercy and lovingkindness entertained toward them on the part of God. It ran throughout in this strain: Since God has proved Himself to be such a benefactor toward you, you must in return act in a corresponding manner towards Him; and if you fail to do so, every privilege is forfeited, every promise in the earlier covenant is ready to be withdrawn.—*Philip Henry Gosse, F.R.S.*

[12865] The old covenant is expressly stated to be that which God made with the children of Israel when He took them to be a peculiar people, and is the same that is commonly called the Mosaic or Sinai covenant, because given to Moses on Mount Sinai. It was a covenant of

peculiarity, by which the whole of the Israelites became . . . a kingdom governed immediately by God, and whose visible rulers and judges were to have no legislative power, but were to act merely as vicegerents of Jehovah, and execute His laws. The great moral code which is binding on all mankind, at all times, and under all circumstances, and the specific enactments of which are only so many expressions of that love to God and man which is essential to the well-being of creation, was laid as the basis of this constitution, and on this account it is frequently called the law ; regular forms of Divine worship were appointed ; a regular priesthood separated for its performance ; and the requisite civil and political institutes ordained. The whole, while admirably adapted to answer every purpose of existing legislation and government, had a prospective or pre-figurative reference to a future and superior dispensation.—*Encyclopædia.*

[12866] Amid all the transactions recorded in the earlier portions of Scripture respecting God's intercourse with men, no attentive reader can fail to mark the general absence of what wears the aspect of law. In the primeval constitution of things there was just the one authoritative prescription—the prohibition to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, given as a test of obedience ; and between the memorable period of the Fall and Moses, the appointment of blood for blood (Gen. ix. 6) and the institution of the ordinance of circumcision (Gen. xvii.) are the only Divine acts which take the form of law, and as such were afterwards embraced in the legal economy. Not but that there were the *elements* of law in much that was transacted and done in those earlier times, because there was what contained the grounds and principles of moral obligation. These are inherent in the very constitution of man, and his relative place in creation ; they were also more or less embodied in every manifestation and act of Godhead toward the human family from the commencement of time to the revelation from Mount Sinai. For everything by which God makes Himself known in His character as the moral Governor of the world of necessity brings with it a corresponding obligation to His rational offspring. In this respect the whole history of God's procedure in connection with the primeval and patriarchal world—His making of the world itself in six days, resting on or hallowing and blessing the seventh—His formation of man in His own image, and of woman from the side of man—His endowing them in Paradise with the blessed provision and heritage of life, so long, but merely so long as they stood in their integrity—the transactions connected with the shame and the covering of our first parents, with the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, with Enoch, with Noah, and the generation that perished in the flood, together with the continuous and varied course of dealings which from the days of Noah and the generation that perished in the flood, together with the continuous and varied course of dealings which from the days of Noah reached to the close of patriarchal times—all from first to last were inwrought with indications of God's character, consequently with the essential principles of truth and duty ; and on the measure of light and sense of obligation thus obtained were founded the religious observances, the social institutions, and relative duties which prevailed among the better portion of the human family.—*Rev. William Milligan, D.D.*

(2) *Its purposes.*

a. That it might serve as a revelation of the righteousness which God expected from Israel as His covenant people in the land of their inheritance.

[12867] The Israelites were God's own peculiar people, His children and heirs, proceeding under the banner of His covenant to occupy *His* land. And that they might know the high ends for which they were to be planted there, and how these ends were to be secured, the Lord took them aside by the way and gave them this revelation of His righteousness. With no other view could God have stretched out His hand to redeem a people to Himself, and with no other testimony set them as His witnesses before the eye of the world on a territory peculiarly His own. He must have acted here in the highest sense for His own glory ; and as His glory, viewed in respect to His moral government, is essentially bound up with the interests of righteousness, so those whom He destined to be the chosen instruments for showing forth His glory in the region prepared for them must go thither with the revelation of His righteousness in their hands as the law which they were to carry out into all the relations of public and private life.—*Patrick Fairbairn, D.D.*

[12868] By this most sacred of religious transactions the Israelites were taken bound as a people to aim continually at the fulfilment of its precepts. But its having been turned into a covenant did not confer on it a different character from that which belonged to it as a rule of life and conduct, or materially affect the results that sprung either from obedience or disobedience to its demands ; nor was any effect contemplated beyond that of adding to its moral weight and deepening its hold upon the conscience. And the very circumstance of its being ratified as a covenant, having God in the relation of a Redeemer for one of the contracting parties, was fraught with comfort and encouragement, since an assurance was thus virtually given that what God in the one covenant of law required His people to do, He stood pledged in the other covenant of promise with His Divine help to aid them in performing. The blood of the covenant as much involved a Divine obligation to confer the grace to obey as it bound them to render the obedience. So that, while there was in this transaction something fitted to lighten rather than to aggravate the burden of the law's yoke, there

was, at the same time, what involved the necessity of compliance with the tenor of its requirements, and took away all excuse from the wilfully disobedient.—*Ibid.*

[12869] In the *immediate* purposes of God respecting Israel we see a sufficient reason for the introduction of the law, and for the prominent place assigned to it in the Divine dispensation. But if we connect the immediate with the *ultimate* design of God in this portion of His dealings we see the absolute necessity of what was done in order to make the past a representation of the future. Canaan stood to the eye of faith the type of heaven, and the character and condition of its inhabitants should have presented the image of what theirs shall be who have entered on the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world. The condition of such, we are well assured, shall be all blessedness and glory. The region of their inheritance shall be Immanuel's land—where the vicissitudes of evil and the pangs of suffering shall be alike unknown. . . . But it is never to be forgotten that their condition shall be thus replenished with all that is attractive and good, because their character shall first have become perfect in holiness. No otherwise than as conformed to Christ's image can they share with Him in His inheritance, for the kingdom of which they are destined heirs is one which the unrighteous cannot inhabit, nor shall any corruption in any form or degree be permitted to dwell in it. "Its people shall be all righteous"—that is their first characteristic.—*Ibid.*

[12870] In addition to the moral ends of a direct and immediate kind which required to be accomplished it was necessary also . . . to make the experience of God's ancient people in connection with the land of promise turn upon their relation to the law. As He could not permit them to enter the inheritance without first placing them under the discipline of the law, so neither could He permit them afterwards to enjoy the good of the land while they lived in neglect of the righteousness the law required. In both respects the type became sadly marred in the event, and the image it presented of the coming realities of heaven was to be seen only in occasional lines and broken fragments. The people were so far from being all righteous that the greater part were ever hardening their hearts in sin. On *their* part a false representation was given of the moral perfection of the future world, and it was in the highest degree impossible that God on *His* part should countenance their backsliding so as notwithstanding to render their state a full representation of its perfection in outward bliss. He must of necessity trouble the condition and change the lot of His people in proportion as sin obtained a footing among them. The less there was of heaven's righteousness in their character the less always must there be of its blessedness and glory in their condition, until at last the Lord was constrained to say: "Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice, neither walked therein; but have walked after the imagination of their own heart: therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will feed them with wormwood," &c. (Jer. ix. 13–16).—*Ibid.*

[12871] The law was added to the provisions and blessings secured in the earlier covenant of promise because of the disposition in the hearts of the people to transgress the obligations under which they stood. . . . To check this disposition—to keep their minds under the discipline of a severe and holy restraint—and circumscribe and limit their way, so that no excuse or liberty should be left them to turn aside from the right path—for this reason was the law. . . . It was to these inclinations alone that it carried a hostile and frowning aspect. In respect to the people themselves it came as a minister of good, and not of evil; and so far from being opposed to the promises of the covenant, it was rather to be viewed as a friendly monitor and guide directing the people how to continue in the blessing of the covenant, and fulfil the ends for which it was established.—*Ibid.*

b. That it might serve to prepare the minds of men for the coming seed.

[12872] It brought the people into contact with the moral character of God, and bound them by covenant sanctions and engagements to make that the standard after which they should endeavour to regulate their conduct. But conscience, enlightened and aroused by the lofty ideal of truth and duty thus presented to it, became but the more sensible of transgressions committed against the righteousness required. Instead of being a witness to which men could appeal in proof of their having fulfilled the high ends for which they had been chosen and redeemed by God, the law rather did the part of an accuser, testifying against them of broken vows and violated obligations. And thus keeping perpetually alive upon the conscience a sense of guilt, it served to awaken in the hearts of those who really understood its spiritual meaning a feeling of the need and a longing expectation of the coming of Him who was to bring in the more perfect state of things, and take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. —*Ibid.*

[12873] In some of the confessions of the Old Testament saints we have undoubted indications of the feeling that the law, which they stood bound to obey, contained a breadth of spiritual requirement which they were far from having reached, and brought against them charges of guilt from which they could obtain no satisfactory deliverance by any means of expiation then provided. The dread which God's manifested presence inspired, even in such seraphic bosoms as Isaiah's—"Woe is me, for I am undone, be-

cause I am a man of unclean lips, and mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts"—is itself a proof of this, for it betokened a conscience much more alive to impressions of guilt than to the blessings of forgiveness and peace. . . . It was this tendency of the law to beget deep conviction of sin, and to leave upon the mind such a felt want of satisfaction which disposed truly enlightened consciences to give a favourable hearing to the doctrines of the gospel, and to rejoice in the salvation brought in by Christ. It was this which gave in their minds such emphasis to the contrast: "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," and which led St. Paul to hold it out as an especial ground of comfort to believers in Christ, that "by Him they might be justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."—*Ibid.*

(3) *Its relation.*

a. To Christ and Christianity.

[12874] If the statements in New Testament Scripture . . . are looked at superficially, they may appear somewhat inconsistent with each other, and different conclusions will naturally be drawn from them according to the class of passages more immediately contemplated. The apparent contrariety arises simply from regard being had in certain of the passages to the essential principles involved in the law, and in others to the distinctive form these assumed in the Old Testament economy—as that definite covenant of law which was established at Sinai. In the one respect, what existed before exists still, and must ever exist; in the other, it is done away in Christ. Our Lord Himself said in one of His most emphatic announcements, "Think not I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass till all be fulfilled" (Matt. v. 17, 18). No words could more distinctly assert, whatever precise meaning we attach to the fulfilling here spoken of, an absolutely good and perpetually abiding element in the law, independent of all times and circumstances. And yet they could not intend to affirm the perpetuity of what then existed in the very shape and form which belonged to it, for even the prophets . . . had connected with the era to be brought in by Messiah a change so great that they did not scruple to represent it as the making of a new covenant and an outpouring of gifts such as could not then be looked for. Nor was less implied in the Melchisedek priesthood, which He was announced to fulfil, or in what He Himself spake respecting the sufferings and death for sin which were to precede His entrance into glory; the mission of the Spirit He was to inaugurate, and the new kingdom He was to set up by the hands of His apostles; while the children of the kingdom, as it then stood, were to be cast out, and their temple laid in ruins. All this bespoke a mighty change in the external aspect of things, following upon the work accomplished by Jesus in the flesh. And, accordingly, when the new state of things had fairly entered, we are explicitly told of the change of relationship in believers towards the law; of their becoming, in a manner, dead to it through the death of Christ; of their being no longer under it, but under grace; of the Christian Church itself having become the temple of God, and believers generally the priesthood that ministered in it, and so on (Rom. vi., vii.; 1 Pet. ii. 5); while still the law itself was characterized as holy, just, and good; and the love to God and man, which formed the sum of its obligations, was not the less enforced as the perfection of all moral duty.—*Rev. William Milligan, D.D.*

[See "MOSAIC ECONOMY," Vol. III., Section XI.]

PART IV.

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION B.

THE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION GENERALLY CONSIDERED.

SYLLABUS.

		PAGE
I.	Significance of the Term and Meaning of Redemption	402
II.	Grandeur of the Doctrine	403
III.	The Great Ends of Redemption	404
IV.	Its Relation to Atonement	404
V.	Its Power and Fulness	405
VI.	Its Wonderfulness and Mystery	405
VII.	Its Unspeakable Benefits	406
VIII.	Aspects of the Atonement	408
IX.	Views of the Early Christian Church on the Atonement	411
X.	Force of the Preposition "for," in its bearing on the Nature of Atonement	415
XI.	General Objections to Vicarious Atonement considered	415
XII.	Reality of the Atonement	419
XIII.	Its Extent	419
XIV.	Its Practical Tendency and Moral Efficacy	420
XV.	Its Infinite Value and Sufficiency	421
XVI.	Substitution in Relation to Reconciliation	422
XVII.	Substitution in Relation to Sanctification	423
XVIII.	Use and Abuse of the Term "Satisfaction"	424
XIX.	The Goodness of God in Redemption	425
XX.	The Justice of God in Redemption	429
XXI.	Homiletical Applications	432

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION B.

THE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION GENERALLY CONSIDERED.

I. Significance of the Term and Meaning of Redemption.

1 A buying or purchasing again; the ransom of sinners from the consequences of sin.

[12875] The conceptions involved in the words, "redeem," "redeemer," "redemption," are familiar to mankind on account of the numerous circumstances in which they come into view; as when a price is paid to recover a captive, or to restore freedom to a slave, or to rescue a person who has exposed himself to some penalty from which a sum of money can save him. . . . Redemption assumed a special prominence in the faith of the Israelites, because its idea of recovery fitted into the relation of Jehovah (the I AM, who changes not) to His feeble people, who would pass away and change continually, were it not for His special protection and support; and still more it fitted into His relation to them as the restorer of that which had been lost, who recovered them when they had actually perished. . . . When we turn to the New Testament, we may say that in its language and conceptions we find nothing with which the Old has not made us familiar; only the fuller revelation and more spiritual dispensation manifests its superiority, as we might antecedently expect it to do. . . . In Acts vii. 35 Moses is said to have been sent by God to the people, by whom he had been rejected, to become "a ruler and a deliverer," literally a ruler and a redeemer, for Moses, as the type of Christ, was the chief actor in that exodus to which we have found the name redemption given. When the father of the Baptist had his tongue loosed, his first words were, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people" (Luke i. 68). And when the holy child Jesus had been born and brought into the temple, Anna, the prophetess, "gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke ii. 38), or, as some read, "for the redemption of Jerusalem." And two of Christ's bewildered disciples, on the very day of His rising from the dead, gave this account of hopes which they knew not whether they might cherish any longer: "But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke xxiv. 21).—*Prof. George C. M. Douglas.*

[12876] The word redemption, says Dr. Gill, is from the Latin tongue, and signifies buying again; and several words in the Greek language of the New Testament are used in the affair of our redemption, which signify the obtaining of something by paying a proper price for it. Sometimes the simple verb *agorazo*, to buy, is used; so the redeemed are said to be bought unto God by the blood of Christ, and to be bought from the earth, and to be bought from among men, and to be bought with a price—that is, with the price of Christ's blood (1 Cor. vi. 20). Hence the Church of God is said to be purchased with it (Acts xx. 28). Sometimes the compound word *exagorazo* is used, which signifies to buy again, or out of the hands of another, as the redeemed are bought out of the hands of justice (Gal. iii. 13 and iv. 5). In other places *lutroo* is used, or other words derived from it, which signifies the deliverance of a slave or captive from thraldom, by paying a ransom price for him; so the saints are said to be redeemed, not with silver or gold, the usual price paid for a ransom, but with a far greater one—the blood and life of Christ, which He came into this world to give as a ransom price for many; and even Himself, which is *antilutron*, an answerable, adequate, and full price for them (1 Pet. i. 18). . . . Redemption, then, in the New Testament usage, is that glorious deliverance from sin secured by the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ for His Church.—*Buck's Theological Dictionary.*

[12877] The idea of redemption is that of buying back again from a condition of slavery. That condition has come upon mankind universally by original sin, and is perpetuated by actual sin. For both original and actual sins

entail ties of obedience to the tempter: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. vi. 16). It is from such a bondage that Christ has redeemed, and is redeeming, sinners; regeneration from original sin, and pardon of actual sin, being each accorded on account of the ransom which He has paid.—*Commentaire de M. Dupuy.*

[12878] The redemption for which the Israelites looked was the glorious and complete reality, for which the redemption from Egypt and from Babylon only prepared the way. Therefore it is said, in language which the Old Testament had already used, that Christ "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 14). And the appeal is made: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). For He said Himself: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45). And so Heb. ix. 12: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." This was the only part of the truth connected with redemption on which a veil of mystery hung in the times of the Old Testament; how the transaction was a redemption in the strictest sense of the word, and what the price was with which the ransom was secured, these things belonged to "the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest."—*Prof. George C. M. Douglas.*

[12879] Redemption signifies literally the purchase of a captive slave from his master, by money or other valuable consideration. But the redemption of mankind was from thraldom under the serpent, and was effected by bruising his head, which can hardly be called a valuable consideration given for the purchase. Or if you will say, as vulgarly apprehended, that the purchase was made from God, who being supreme Lord and Master paramount of all captives, could command them out of the hands of their immediate owners, what money or thing of value did He receive; what vacant space was there in the treasury of His riches that could admit an addition to increase His wealth? what did He lose by the recovery of a fallen race that should require a compensation for the damage? And yet in our days the term is so constantly restrained to cases of slavery or pawnage bought off with money, that I do not recollect ever to have heard it applied to prisoners of war in civilized countries, although such frequently obtain their enlargement for a certain sum; because they are not regarded as a property of the persons who have them in their power, nor consequently as an object of sale. But among the Jews redemption had a wider latitude, being extended to every deliverance from servitude, by what means soever effected. Thus in the Old Testament God is frequently styled the Lord who redeemed Israel from the hand of Pharaoh, out of the house of bondage; the Lord that bought them: yet nobody can apprehend it done by a bargain made, or any gratuity given to Pharaoh or other princes, to resign up their right of dominion over their slaves.

II. Grandeur of the Doctrine.

1 The redemption wrought by Christ is not a partial privilege, but a supreme and universal blessing.

[12880] It opens the gates of mercy to every nation under heaven, levels the vain distinctions of earthly excellence, checks the pride of science, silences the presumption of religion, and unites the various tribes of man in one fold, under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ. And can any scheme of religion be more agreeable to a liberal heart, or more satisfactory to an inquisitive and enlightened mind? Does any place the government of God in a more just and amiable point of view, or throw an equal lustre and importance on the character and conduct of our great Redeemer? It is a doctrine, also, which contains no peculiar difficulties, which does not absurdly contradict and disparage, or artfully flatter and extol, the powers of human reason. It shows that the great Ruler of the universe does not unaccountably distribute the rewards and punishments of eternity by an antecedent and arbitrary decree, "which altereth not;" but, as the gracious Father and Preserver of all, ministers the means of happiness abundantly to all His creatures. And while it secures the honour of our Creator, it degrades not the person, and it detracts not from the merit of our Redeemer. It reaches all men, and pervades all time with undiminished influence; it disarms the justice and resentment of God, and nothing can resist and defeat its ends but the impenitence and the infidelity of man.—*J. Fawcett, D.D.*

[12881] All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Sin is no trivial affair; it is the casting off of all allegiance to God, and joining against His kingdom in confederacy with the powers of darkness. This defection in duty—this apostasy from God—this revolt to Satan, must not be passed over as a matter of comparative unimportance. Repentance cannot repair the breach, nor atone for the transgression. The Son of God, the gift of the Father's pity and compassion to man, undertakes the desperate cause. He becomes the sinner's friend, dies "the just for the unjust," and "redeems us from the curse of the law by becoming

a curse for us." He thus opens the way to reconciliation with God; and a commission is given to proclaim these glad tidings throughout the world. The apostles convey the message: they dwell with rapture on the compassion of the Father and the love of the Son. They can neither think, speak, nor write on any other subject than the cross, and are "determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." . . . It is expressed in every variety of language, plain and metaphorical, narrative and doctrinal. Not only has it a pre-eminent place in almost every book in the Bible, but it was set forth in the symbols of every religion of the world for four thousand years, was embodied in every rite and ceremony of the law, introduced in every possible form into the gospel, and was the chief subject of a whole treatise in the New Testament. Animal sacrifice, which had continued nearly from the creation to the coming of the Messiah, ceased when this atonement had been made; and from that time, this became the grand theme of the gospel, and occupied as prominent a place in the new dispensation as sacrifice had done in the old; and the effect of preaching this doctrine has been the conversion of millions of the human race, and the complete transformation of their principles and conduct. Nor has it yet lost its power: it is still the great instrument used for evangelizing the world; and still the powers of darkness yield to its force; nor will it lose its virtue till "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ."—*Rev. Charles Jerram, M.A.*

III. The Great Ends of Redemption.

1 To harmonize the glory of a holy God, and the good of guilty man.

[12882] It is an imperfect vision that sees but one motive here. This subject may be compared to those binary stars which seem to the naked eye but one, yet, when brought into the field of the telescope, resolve themselves into two shining orbs, that roll in brightness and beauty around a common but invisible centre. Blessed be His holy name! He loved His own glory, yet He so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.—*Dr. Guthrie.*

[12883] The ends of redemption are that the justice of God might be satisfied; His people reconciled, adopted, sanctified and brought to glory, delivered from the curse of the law, sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell.—*Buck's Theological Dictionary.*

[12884] Purity is the end of our redemption. If we could have gone to heaven in our sins, Christ needed not have died. Why did He shed His blood but to redeem us from a vain conversation? (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) And Titus ii. 14: "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people." Christ shed His blood to wash off our filth. The cross was both an altar and a laver. Jesus Christ died not only to save us from wrath (1 Thess. i. 10), but to save us from sin (Matt. i. 21). Out of His sides came water, which signifies our cleansing as well as blood, which signifies our justifying (1 John v. 6). The truth is, it were to make the body of Christ monstrous, if the head should be pure and not the members.

IV. Its Relation to Atonement.

1 The relation of cause and effect.

[12885] The term *atonement* should not be confounded, as is frequently done, with the term *redemption*. Between these two terms there are plain differences; and no one without a perception of these differences can treat this great subject with lucidness or accuracy. They differ in object and design, and of course are of a different nature; so that things may be truly affirmed of one, which cannot be truly affirmed of the other. *First* they differ in *object*. Atonement is offered to God as its object; redemption is purchased or procured for men as its object. Atonement is a sacrifice offered; redemption is a benefit conferred. *Secondly*, they differ in *design*. The design of the atonement is to render God propitious as the Sovereign Ruler; the design of redemption to make man everlastingly blessed. Hence, *thirdly*, they differ in *nature*. Atonement being made to God, and made by a sacrifice of inestimable value, is in its own nature infinite; nor is it possible for us to conceive how its intrinsic worth and glory, or its efficacy and adaptation to its end, could be increased.—*Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge.*

[12886] The atonement takes effect by changing the relations of God towards the guilty (Rom. iii. 21). Redemption takes effect by changing the relations of the guilty towards God (Rev. xiv. 4). The former was completely finished on the cross (Dan. ix. 24; John xix. 30). The latter is now in daily progressive operation, and will not be finished till the final consummation of all things (Eph. iv. 30). The latter is a proper subject of prayer, but not the former (Psa. xxvi. 11; cxxx. 8). The atonement is definite only in design; but in nature, value, and sufficiency is infinite, and in adaptation to the wants of sinners, universal (John iii. 16). Redemption, on the other hand, is personal in its nature, particular in its purpose and application, and, of course, limited in its extent to the number of those who are actually made partakers of its inestimable blessings, by faith in the Redeemer's blood. . . . Redemption is the freedom of the Church which was itself purchased by the atonement. "For Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. v. 9).—*Ibid.*

[12887] There is a slight ambiguity in the use of the word Redemption. Much confusion of thought arises upon this subject owing to the twofold meaning of the word redemption used

in a theological sense. First, redemption may mean the Divine acts or processes in the procuring of man's salvation. If this meaning be considered, then the atonement is part of redemption, namely, that act of Divine love which removes all obstacles and barriers to the full, free, and rich *display* of love forfeited by the Fall, and also which furnishes a sufficiently powerful motive to draw man from his sin and selfishness toward God and toward his fellowmen. Secondly, redemption may also refer to man's actually sharing in the privileges and blessings which the atonement or cross of Christ renders possible and secures. In this sense redemption is almost equivalent to salvation, which implies various steps and stages, from the first spark of grace in the soul to the perfection of body and soul in the restitution of all things. —*C. N.*

V. Its Power and Fulness.

[12888] Our redemption by Christ is (1) full, plenteous (Psa. cxxx. 7), in the number of the redeemed and the rich blessings of redemption. (2) Complete, extending to all the effects of sin and the whole nature of the redeemed. (3) Secure, by the payment of the full ransom to eternal justice on the part of God, and by the sealing of the Holy Spirit to the true believer (Eph. i. 4; iv. 30). (4) Eternal in its rise and blessed consequences (Heb. ix. 12). (5) Applied progressively, inchoately now in the earnest (Eph. i. 14), and fully hereafter in the state of perfect bliss (Rom. viii. 13; 1 Cor. i. 30; Eph. iv. 30).—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[12889] Christ's redemption is not merely a price or ransom equivalent, or making a due satisfaction according to the just demerit of sin, but is plenteous redemption; there is abundance of the gift of righteousness and unsearchable riches of Christ; yea, 1 Tim. i. 14. The grace of our Lord (that is of Christ) was [we translate it] abundant; but the word reacheth farther, It was overfull, redundant, more than enough; and yet, says Paul, I had sins enough to pardon, one would think, to exhaust it; I was a blasphemer, &c., but I found so much grace in Christ, even more than I knew what to do withal (1 Tim. i. 13–15).—*Dr. Goodwin.*

[12890] The properties of redemption are these: (1) It is agreeable to all the perfections of God; (2) what a creature never could merit, and therefore entirely of free grace; (3) it is special and particular; (4) full and complete; and lastly (5) it is eternal as to its blessings.—*Buck's Theological Dictionary.*

[12891] The redemption of Christ reaches in its merciful contrivances and purposes to all mankind.—*W. Hanna, D.D.*

[12892] How is it accomplished? Not by "corruptible things, as silver and gold." "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1) It is by the sacrifice of a life. Nothing in the universe is so valuable as life. Vegetable life is valuable. One flower is more precious than a dead globe. Sentient life is more valuable, rational life is the most valuable of all. Men feel that "silver and gold," the wealth of the Indies, are worthless in comparison with their life. (2) It is by the sacrifice of a most perfect life. "As of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Christ, like a lamb, was innocent. He "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." He was the "Lamb of God"—God's own immaculate Son. Some men's lives are more valuable than others—statesmen, reformers, ministers. No life in the universe so precious as Christ's. In itself more valuable than all the lives that have ever been. Now this life was given, freely laid down, in order to deliver souls from the moral evils that possess them. This self-sacrifice of Christ is the essence and power of the gospel. It is the "power of God unto salvation." The blood that cleanseth man from all sin.

[12893] The single fact of redemption, in its double aspect of love and power, gives us a deeper insight into justice, fitness, merit, and the real meaning of absolute submission, than all human inductions, all prudent calculations, and all the abstract demonstrations of a hollow theosophy.—*Mme. Swetchine.*

[12894] It is a redemption ordained before all time. "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." Redemption is no after-thought; it is a part of God's eternal plan of operation. It was with Him an idea when He created the universe, and perhaps a motive for the creation. "The lamb was slain before the foundation of the world." No wonder that the principle of remedialism runs through all nature, is recognized by all society, and commends itself to all souls. Redemption having been purposed "before the foundation of the world," comes to the world—(1) unsought; (2) unmerited; (3) absolutely free.

[12895] To save sinners means something more than to call with a voice sweeter than that of Orpheus, or even to follow with patient, unwearied steps, and bring them home on the tender heart. It meant—ah! it meant—to die. "The Good Shepherd layeth down His life for the sheep." So, by nothing easier, He sought us; so, by nothing less, He saves us. I began to understand why the Church has adopted the cross as her central symbol, more central than even that of the Good Shepherd.—*Schönberg Cotta Series.*

VI. Its Wonderfulness and Mystery.

[12896] The work of God in our redemption, it is indeed wonderful and mysterious; and why should it seem strange to you that it is so? Are there any other works of God which are not mysterious? Consider the creation and formation of this world; consider the sun, the moon, and the stars, the works of His hand;

tell me by what secret power they move, by what rule their different motions were at first impressed, and by what secret in nature or providence ever since preserved. Or, if you think it hard to be sent to consider the heavens at a distance, do but consider the earth, and the meanest creatures of it: can you tell how they are formed; how they "live, and move, and have their being"? Nay, can you name that work of God which is not mysterious? Is there anything in nature the first principles of which you can discover and see into? If in all the works of God there is no such thing, why should we think it strange that in His work of redemption He has appeared so like Himself, and that in this, as in everything else, "His ways are past finding out"? We live by the preservation of Providence, and enjoy the comforts and pleasures of this life; and yet how mysterious is our preservation! how little do we know of the methods by which we are preserved! and yet the benefits of it we enjoy, notwithstanding our ignorance of the means: and why is it a greater absurdity to suppose that men may be redeemed, without comprehending all the means made use of in their redemption? In all other instances whatever, the miraculousness of an escape adds to the pleasure and joy of it, and is always remembered with a kind of ecstasy in the relation. Salvation is the only instance in which men demur on the means, and are unwilling to receive the mercy, because they cannot understand the methods of obtaining it. In any other case a man would be thought beside himself who should act in the same manner. — *Bp. Sherlock*, 1678–1761.

[12897] Is it not an amazing thing that men shall attempt to investigate the mystery of the redemption, when, at the same time that it is propounded to us as an article of faith solely, we are told that "the very angels have desired to pry into it in vain"?—*Sterne.*

[12898] It is wonderful indeed! so wonderful as at times almost to confound us into scepticism, to extort the question, "Can these things be?" But the evidence that God has actually done what the testimony of the gospel declares him to have done is full and satisfactory. And, how natural soever may be the objection to the sacrifice of the Son of God, drawn from the insignificance of our world among the works of God, there is, it may be remarked, a strange inconsistency on the part of those by whom it is urged. While they talk in the very loftiest terms of the infinite benevolence of Deity (and for that which is infinite no terms can be too lofty), they yet reject and ridicule, as an absurdity and an impossibility, that proof of His benevolence by which, above all other, its infinitude is ascertained. In the language of elegant eulogy, they pronounce the love of God to be without limits; and then they proceed to set their own bounding lines to its exercise. And the reason, it is to be feared, is not that the mediation of the Son of God is an expression of benevolence too great to be true, but that it is a mode of its expression too humbling and too holy for proud and depraved nature to relish; offensive at once to its high-mindedness and its corruption.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

VII. Its Unspeakable Benefits.

[12899] It should be remembered that redemption is not the same thing as deliverance or emancipation. It is much more. An act of deliverance by itself tells nothing of the motive or feeling of the deliverer or the delivered, nor of the future course of either; the redemption of Christ portrays the heart of God, and its acceptance involves the inner and outer life of the delivered, and its benefits reach to the most distant ages of eternity. It is not only restoring to the state of purity lost by Adam's fall: it includes much richer blessings than those that Adam originally possessed. We gain more in Christ than we lost by Adam.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[12900] Love was the cord which bound the God-man to the holy cross; the nails and the cross could not have held Him had not love bound Him fast. It is the same blessed cord of love which united Divinity to humanity; and for what cause? Love was the sole cause. It was love which at the first created us in the Divine image; and when we had lost the life of grace, love willing to give us back that which we had lost by sin and frailty. God sent forth His only Son, and willed that by His blood grace should be restored to us. And the Son, in all things obedient, humbled Himself to the death of the cross for love of us and for our salvation. . . . Oh, inestimable love! If man can give no greater proof of love than to lay down his life for a friend, how should we appreciate Thy love towards us who were Thine enemies? Thou hast given Thy life. Thou has ransomed us with Thy blood. This surpasses all love. . . . Thou hast become the Mediator. Thy death has made peace between man and God; and the nails which pierced Thee are to us as the keys of life eternal!—*St. Catherine of Siena.*

[12901] The Lord Jesus Christ, the Moral Ruler of the human race, instead of inflicting the penalties, has submitted to them; He has "died, the just for the unjust," and has been "made a curse for us." This supreme act becomes ours, not by formal imputation, but through the law which constitutes His life the original spring of our own. His eternal trust in the Father, His eternal joy in the Father, His eternal love for the Father, are the root of the trust and joy and love of which we are conscious in the Divine presence. In the strength of His trust we have faith in God; in the fulness of His joy we rejoice in God; and the fires of our love for God are kindled by the fervour of His love for the Father. And when

we are humbled by the bitter remembrance of sin, and are almost crushed by a sense of the magnitude of the just penalties of sin; when we are striving to humble ourselves before the infinite justice of God, and that to confess were these penalties to be inflicted on us, the Judge of all the earth would do right; we find in the death of Christ the perfect expression and fulfilment of that submission which we know ought to be manifested by ourselves. He did not merely confess our sin; He did not merely acknowledge that we deserved to suffer. He endured the penalties of sin, and so made an actual submission to the authority and righteousness of the principle which those penalties express. What we had no force to do, He has done; and through our union with Him, His submission renders our submission possible.—*R. W. Dale, D.D.*

[12902] As I shall be uplifted on a cross
In darkness of eclipse and anguish dread,
So shall I lift up in my pierced hands,
Not into dark, but light; not unto death,
But life, beyond the reach of guilt and grief,
The whole creation.

—*E. B. Browning.*

[12903] If I should compare the natural state of man, I should conceive an immense graveyard filled with yawning sepulchres and dead and dying men. All around are lofty walls and massive iron gates. At the gate stands Mercy, sad spectatress of the melancholy scene. An angel flying through the midst of heaven, attracted by the awful sight, exclaims, "Mercy, why do you not enter, and apply to these objects of compassion the restoring balm?" Mercy replies, "Alas! I dare not enter; Justice bars the way." By her side a form appeared like unto the Son of Man. "Justice," He cried, "what are thy demands, that Mercy may enter and stay this carnival of death?" "I demand," says Justice, "pain for their ease—degradation for their dignity—shame for their honour—death for their life!" "I accept the terms; now, Mercy, enter." "What pledge do you give for the performance of these conditions?" "My word, my oath!" "When will you fulfil them?" "Four thousand years hence, upon the hill of Calvary." The bond was sealed in the presence of attendant angels, and committed to patriarchs and prophets. A long series of rites and ceremonies, sacrifices and oblations, were instituted to preserve the memory of that solemn deed. And at the close of the four thousandth year, behold, at the foot of Calvary, the incarnate Son of God! Justice, too, was there. In her hand she bore the dreadful bond; she presented it to the Redeemer, and demanded now the fulfilment of its awful terms. He accepted the deed, and together they ascended to the summit of the Mount. Mercy was seen attendant at His side, and the weeping Church followed in His train. When He reached the summit of the Mount, what did He with the bond? Did He tear it in pieces, and scatter it to the winds of heaven? Ah! no: He nailed it to His cross; and when the wood was prepared, and the devoted sacrifice stretched out on the tree, Justice sternly cried, "Holy fire, come down from heaven, and consume this sacrifice." Holy fire: "I come! I come! and when I have consumed this sacrifice, I will burn the universe." The fire descended, and rapidly consumed His humanity, but when it touched His Deity, it expired. Then did the heavenly hosts break forth in rapturous strains, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and goodwill towards men!"—*Gems of Thought.*

[12904] Is man fallen? and, as such, ignorant, degraded, and debased? Here is a salvation precisely adapted to his condition, and able to restore him to his original dignity; a salvation that will impart light to the darkness of his reason—peace to the tumult of his conscience—joy to the anguish of mind—hope to the gloom of his despair. Is he guilty? Here is a sufficient Saviour, an atoning sacrifice, a forgiving God. Is he polluted? Here is "a fountain for sin and uncleanness"—a hallowed flood flowing from the cross of Christ, to wash away his guilty stains. Is he alienated from God? Here is a medium of approach—a way of access—the middle wall of partition is broken down—the alpine elevations of his guilt are levelled with the dust, and the penitent prodigal is received into the family of heaven, amidst the congratulations of saints and the songs of adoring angels. In every point of view the salvation of the gospel is suited to his case. Is he a sinner? It offers him pardon. Is he a debtor? It presents him his discharge. Is he a captive? It gives him liberty. Is he thirsty? It is a river of life. Is he weary? It is a sweet repose. Is he ignorant? It is a Divine instructor. Is he diseased? It is health and vigour to his soul. Is he dying? It is immortal life. This is the prevailing character of its proclamations—the general style of its appeal: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters," &c. "The spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "He is able to save to the uttermost."—*Ibid.*

[12905] The blessings provided by redemption are the full, free, and everlasting remission of guilt, acceptance with God, adoption into His family, and restoration to His paternal love, the renovation of our depraved nature, and the reproduction of the moral image of God in our souls, the hope of life eternal (John xvii. 3), and at last the final enjoyment of that life in the perfection of purity and love, and unmingled and uninterrupted blessedness for evermore. These are the blessings of which the depraved hearts of men may prevent them from feeling the value. But, weighed in the balance of truth, they are inestimably precious. "They are not to be gotten with gold, neither shall

silver be weighed for the price of them" (Job xxviii. 15). And creation cannot furnish an equivalent for the loss of them. The gain of the whole world would be an infinite loss if obtained at such a cost. They are benefits infinitely worthy of Divine benevolence to confer, the gifts worthy of the Giver!—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

[12906] The blessings of redemption include (1) The vindication of the perfections of deity in devising and executing the eternal covenant, so wonderfully unfolding the wisdom and power, the justice and mercy of the Divine nature; the honour and righteousness of the law; the greatest hatred to sin, and the greatest love to the sinner. (2) The deliverance of the redeemed from all evils; from the law, in its bondage as a covenant of works; from sin in its guilt and power, and all its consequences; from death and from eternal wrath (Gal. iii. 13, iv. 5; Rom. vi. 18–22; Tit. ii. 14; Hos. xiii. 14). (3) The introduction to the highest good, present and future; holiness, happiness, pardon, and peace; life and liberty; adoption and sanctification (Tit. ii. 14; Eph. i. 17; Rom. viii. 23). . . . Not to be limited only to the elect people of God; even the ungodly are benefited by the redemptive work of Christ. It was a saying of Dr. McNeile, "In redemption God opens wide His arms to all mankind; in salvation He closes them in upon the elect."—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[12907] Harp, lift thy voice on high!
Ye everlasting hills! Ye angels! bow,
Bow, ye redeemed of men! God was made flesh,
And dwelt with man on earth! The Son of God,
Only begotten and well beloved, between
Men and His Father's justice interposed;
Put nature on;—His wrath sustained;
And in their name suffered, obeyed, and died,
Making His soul an offering for sin;
Just for unjust, and innocence for guilt;
By doing, suffering, dying unconstrained,
Save by omnipotence of boundless grace,
Complete atonement made to God appeased;
Made honourable His insulted law,
Turning the wrath aside from pardoned man,
Thus Truth with Mercy met, and Righteousness,
Stooping from highest heaven, embraced fair Peace
That walked the earth in fellowship with Love.
. . . . . .
Mysterious Love!
God was made flesh, and dwelt with men on earth!
Blood holy, blood Divine for sinners shed!
. . . . . .
Saviour of men! Henceforth be Thou my theme;
Redeeming love my shady day and night,
Mankind were lost, all lost, and all redeemed!
—*Gems of Thought.*

VIII. Aspects of the Atonement.

1 Metaphysical.

[12908] This appellation, though it occurs only once in the New Testament, is characteristic of the doctrine. The idea expressed by this word is that of agreement or reconciliation on the ground of satisfaction given: the removal of the hindrance to concord and fellowship. Sin has separated God from man: they have been disjoined: God has hid His face from him. Christ, by His sacrifice, has brought these parties together: God is thereby at one with His people; and therefore the work of the Redeemer, in satisfying Divine justice, and in magnifying the law, is an at-one-ment. This is the comprehensive term by which His sacrifice, and the effects resulting from it, are embraced and expressed.

This expression—atonement—includes the redeeming work of Christ,—His active and passive obedience, His sufferings, and their ultimate and crowning result, the death of the cross. It includes *expiation*, which forms the ground for pardoning the offender; and *propitiation*, which presents a reason or motive for pardoning the sinner. Expiation has immediate reference to the condition of the offender; propitiation to the disposition of the judge. These two things, expiation and propitiation, may be conceived as so far distinct and separate, that the latter does not follow as a matter of course from the former. But, on the other hand, an expiation may manifestly include a propitiation; that is, "be both a valid reason for pardoning, and a determining motive to the will of the competent authority to admit and act upon that reason.—*D. Dewar, D.D.*

[12909] Not only are the sacrificial terms of the law applied to the death of Christ, but others which open up more fully the true nature of atonement are superadded in the description of that great sacrifice as possessing, in truth and reality, that expiatory virtue which the sacrifices of the law but relatively enjoyed, and but imperfectly reflected. Reasonable as this seems, and arising out of the very nature of the case, yet has it not failed to furnish matter of cavil to disputatious criticism; the very want of those expressions which in strictness could belong only to the true propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, being made a ground of objection against the propitiatory nature of the Mosaic atonement. Of this we have a striking instance with respect to the words λύτρον and ἀντίλυτρον. The expression, *bearing sin*, furnishes another: the author of the "Scripture Account of Sacrifices" (p. 146) urging the omission of this phase in the case of the legal sacrifices, as an argument against the vicarious nature of the Levitical atonement.

Such arguments, however, only recoil upon the objectors, inasmuch as they supply a reluctant testimony in favour of the received sense of these expressions, when applied to that sacrifice to which they properly appertained. But

from this these critics seem to entertain no apprehension: and their mode of reasoning is certainly a bold exercise of logic. From the want of such expressions, as being of vicarious import, they conclude against the vicarious nature of the Mosaic sacrifices; and, this point gained, they return, and triumphantly conclude against the vicarious import of these expressions in that sacrifice to which they are applied. Not to disturb these acute reasoners in the enjoyment of their triumph, let us consider whether the terms employed in describing the death of Christ, as a propitiatory sacrifice, be sufficiently precise and significant to remove all doubt with respect to its true nature and operation.—*Bp. Magee.*

[12910] To enumerate the various passages of Scripture, in which the death of Christ is represented to have been a sacrifice, and the effect of this sacrifice to have been strictly propitiatory, must lead to a prolix detail. There are some, however, which, as throwing a stronger light upon the nature and import of the Christian sacrifice, demand our most particular attention; and the more so, because, from their decisive testimony in favour of the received doctrine of atonement, the utmost stretch of ingenuity has been exerted to weaken their force, and divert their application. Of these, the most distinguished is the description of the sufferings and death of Christ, in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. We there find this great personage represented as one on whom "the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all;" as one who "was numbered with transgressors, and bear the sins of many;" as one who consequently "was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities;" and who, in "making His soul an (אשם) offering for sin," suffered "the chastisement of our peace, and healed us by His stripes." Thus we have, here, a clear and full explanation of the nature and efficacy of the sacrifice offered for us by our blessed Redeemer.—*Ibid.*

[12911] According as we notice the aspects of the Saviour's death, we may occasionally vary our language. Has it a special reference to Divine Justice? It is a *satisfaction.* Does it contemplate injury and indignity offered by us to the character and government of Him "who ruleth among men"? It is an *atonement.* Does it denote the consequences of that event towards ourselves? It is an *expiation.* Should any object to words which are alleged to be without scriptural warrant—we reply that the phraseology of inspiration is significant, and that we best honour when we investigate it. It may be cited in the most literal manner to excuse thought, protect artifice, and supersede confession. . . . An atonement is convertible with sacrifice, and both necessarily involve a compensative principle and a retributive act, strangely and mercifully turned aside from them on whom they should have fixed, and yet on another duly exacted and rigorously enforced.

We believe the death of Christ is such a transaction—that it is a sacrificial endurance in His person of our moral liabilities—that it is an infliction on Him of what we had incurred—that it is the only honourable consideration on which Divine justice can remit the culprit's sentence, and receive the culprit's contrition—that it is a redress and a means of reconciliation—that it leaves our Maker with as strict consistency to pardon as He had ever known of necessity to punish—that it is in fact a contrivance to convince man of his deepest guilt by bestowing upon him His fullest salvation, and to impress the universe with the sublime sentiment that infinite purity hates sin as much as infinite mercy loves the sinner. Henceforth the Ruler of heaven and earth can "declare His righteousness in the remission of sin," can "be just and acquit him who believeth in Jesus."—*Richard Winter Hamilton, D.D.*

[12912] Expiation imports a religious act, by virtue of which the guilt of sin is annulled. Propitiation looks to God with the design of removing His anger. Satisfaction looks more especially to, and endeavours to meet, the obligation due to law; while the more direct reference of expiation is to the sin, with the view of nullifying its penal consequences. Hence it is common to say the atonement satisfies justice, propitiates God, and expiates sin. But these are only different ways of apprehending the same thing. The one essential thing common to them all is the deliverance of man from his due guilt and punishment by the penal substitution of Christ.

But as the vicarious sufferings of Christ are not identical with the act of pardon flowing out of them, His propitiation, or satisfaction in expiating the sin of man, is distinct from the justification, of which it is the procuring cause. If the act of atonement were strictly identical with that of forgiveness, there would be no such act as the forgiveness of God, except as it took place in the sacrifice of Christ. That this was not the case is clear from the fact that, prior to believing, men for whom Christ died are unforgiven. He is the propitiation set forth, in order that God may justify "him which believeth in Jesus." "By Him all that believe are justified," and since they are not justified until they believe, though Christ had already atoned for them, it follows that expiation is not forgiveness, except potentially, but the great efficacious work, in virtue of which forgiveness is bestowed on all who will comply with the appointed conditions. —*Marshall Randles.*

[12913] In reply to Dr. Priestley's assertion that the sacrificial atonement merely implies "the making of anything clean or holy," Archbishop Magee observes, "The term כפר in its primary sense signifies to smear or cover with pitch, as appears from Gen. vi. 14, and from this covering with pitch it has been metaphori-

cally transferred to things of a different nature; insomuch that in all the thirty-seven instances of extra-levitical atonement adduced by Dr. Taylor, he asserts that the word כפר retains something of its original sense. . . . The fallacy of Dr. Priestley's interpretation consists in this, that he assumes that to be the sole end of the atonement, which, although an undoubted consequence from it, was inseparably connected with, and subservient to, another and more important effect: the atonement indeed purifying, so as to qualify for the service and worship of God; but this purification consisting in the removal of that which unfitted and disqualified for such sacred purposes; bringing what was undeserving the Divine regard into a state of agreement with the Divine purity, and rendering it the object of the Divine approbation. To make atonement, then, to God, was to remove what was offensive; and thus, by conciliating the Divine favour, to sanctify for the Divine service."—*Discourses and Dissertations.*

[12914] Beyond all question there is a large number of passages in the New Testament which speak of the sacrifice of Christ as a ransom which He paid to deliver us from the captivities of evil; as a propitiation which He offered to a justly-offended God for the sin, or the sins, of the world: as a satisfaction which He rendered to the law of God, in virtue of which God can remain just while yet He justifies the ungodly. I do not cite these passages. There is no need. I affirm, without any fear of contradiction, that no man who has read the New Testament carefully and candidly, has failed to find this view of the atonement in it. It takes many forms; it at once hides and discloses itself under many figures of speech; it gives shape and substance to many passages and arguments, especially in the writings of St. Paul: but, above and beside all this, there is a spirit pervading the whole Christian revelation which points steadfastly in this direction, and which no reader of spiritual discernment can possibly miss.

So far from having been missed, it is *this* aspect of the atonement which the popular theology is apt to insist on as the only aspect as containing in itself the whole doctrine of the Cross. Men are constantly invited and urged to trust in the propitiation offered to God once for all by Christ, and assured that if they do unfeignedly and heartily trust in it their sins will be forgiven them, and they will be reconciled or atoned to God. Now I am very far from denying or even questioning this aspect of the atonement. On the contrary I heartily affirm it. I acknowledge that it is taught in the Scriptures of the New Testament, taught more frequently even and in more varied forms than any other, and that it is therefore to be believed by all who accept Christ for their Teacher and Lord, even although they do not comprehend it. But apart from the sacrifice of the Cross, even the love of God could not have gained access to us, that our sins could not have been forgiven. In short, it is a great mystery: or, rather, it is a series of great mysteries which we cannot hope to fathom.—*Samuel Cox, D.D.*

[12915] Glimpses into this mystery may, however, be permitted us, and glimpses which reach, for aught that I can tell, to its very centre and heart. We may say, for example, that only as a satisfaction was rendered to the Divine law which we had broken could that law be vindicated and established in the respect of men. Or we may say that, in and through Christ, we are taught that obedience to that law, even though it leads through suffering and death, is the only path to peace and blessedness, and that thus the law of God is not only vindicated, but glorified. Or we may say that since He, who might justly have inflicted on us the penalties due to sin, Himself endured them on our behalf, the revelation of the eternal righteousness of God was even more emphatic than it would have been had these penalties been exacted of those who had incurred them. Or, again, we may say that, as all men had sinned, it was necessary that He in whom all men are and live—the archetypal all-comprehending Man—should obey for them all, that so, by the obedience of the One, the many disobedient might be made righteous. In many ways we may try to lessen the burden and pressure of this great mystery. But the more we brood over it, and the wiser we grow, and the clearer the light that falls on it, the more humbly do we confess that it is dark with excess of light, that it is so high we cannot attain to it, so wide that we cannot grasp it. All our endeavours do but land us in the conclusion, that we cannot hope to comprehend the relations which obtain among the sacred Persons of the Blessed Trinity, or how those relations were modified, if indeed they were modified, by the incarnation and death of Christ.—*Ibid.*

[12916] Christ is God and man. He alone has obeyed the law perfectly, so that in Him is no sin; and therefore He owes no punishment. He can offer His own life freely. That the innocent should suffer for the guilty is less discrepant from our sense of justice, when the sufferer, though most truly a man, is likewise God; because in His mediatorial character He is carrying out that very plan which, as God, His own love and compassion devised for man's salvation. The sacrifice of a mere man, however pure, could have no influence over the condition of the whole human race; but the Son of God was able to gather in to Himself by a deep human sympathy, enforced by infinite power and knowledge, all the sins of the whole world, and bear them in His own body on the cross. For, again, He is God, and so in Him, as well as in the Father, we live and move and have our being, so that He can comprehend our sins and griefs, and by His act bring back peace instead of them. Justice is appeased, and God's abhorrence of sin shown forth, if the punishment

due to it has been inflicted on so excellent a victim. And the love of God manifests itself without a drawback, because the Divine will itself in our Redeemer is consenting to His sacrifice. Because of His obedience unto the death of the cross, God has highly exalted Him; and He has sent from the Father the Holy Spirit, who binds together His elect people, and binds them also to Him. A firm and abiding belief in Him, and His power to redeem, connects every Christian with that sacrifice, so that offered but once the blood is sufficient to sprinkle every man as though he were present at it.—*Abp. Thomson* (*condensed*).

[12917] Righteousness is conceived—not as a mere quality of the redeemed, but as their very substance and life. It is no longer separable from them, even in idea. This is the consummation of our holiness. Had we not been saved, sin would at last have become something more than a mere quality of our nature; it would have become our very self; it would have become inseparable from us, even in idea. Not until there is a complete identification between the soul and sin does God finally abandon us. While our true self can in any way be distinguished from the sin that is in us, He clings to us and works for our redemption. When sin and self become inseparable, then God deals with us as He deals with sin; He cannot do otherwise. He withdraws Himself from us, and His withdrawal is a mortal blow—a blow which, on one theory of the future of the impenitent, inflicts endless torment, which is what is commonly understood by "the second death;" and which on another theory inflicts agony so sharp and terrible, that it ends in the exhaustion and destruction of the life of the soul. God made Christ sin for us; withdrew from Him, as He must otherwise have withdrawn from us had *we* become sin, and this withdrawal brought with it the death which atoned for sin.—*R. W. Dale, D.D.*

2 Ethical.

[12918] Those who think of the sacrifice of the Cross only as a manifestation of the love of God, may only too easily come to rely on that love without responding to it, or may respond to it only with a weak sentiment which does not purify and ennoble their lives. Indeed, the world has long sneered at the Church, or at certain members of the Church, as holding a creed which either persuades them that they may be relieved from the punishment of sin without being redeemed from sin itself, or which quickens in them a weak, puling sentiment incapable of producing in them the elements of a righteous and manly character. . . . When we once apprehend the love of God for us, a responsive love is kindled in us. And this love, if at least it be a true response, if, that is, it be like the love from which it springs, cannot be a mere sentiment easily divorced from righteousness. . . . And that the quickening of this love within us is the proper effect of faith in the atonement, I need not cite texts to prove. They are to be found on every page of the New Testament, and notably in that large and ill-understood class of passages which speaks of the blood of Christ as of a virtue to cleanse us from all sin. To many it would seem, from the kind of language they employ, that this cleansing virtue shapes itself as a chemical and detergent constituent of the mere blood shed upon the tree! Others appear to assign this efficacy to the mere pain endured for men by the Son of Man—assuming what surely needs to be proved, that that which is physical is capable of being converted into moral equivalents, that mere bodily pain may become a spiritual power.

Rightly viewed, there is nothing in this doctrine to favour the thought of salvation apart from righteousness. Rather, the atonement of of Christ is, according to the Scriptures, a revelation of the love of the righteous God designed to kindle the love and service of righteousness in sinful men; it only produces its due effect on us when it "delivers us from this present evil world," since He "bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, might live unto righteousness."—*Samuel Cox, D.D.*

IX. Views of the Early Christian Church on the Atonement.

1 Explanation of the apparent disregard of the doctrine in the early ages.

[12919] It seems, at first thought, somewhat strange and perplexing that the doctrine of the atonement—considering both its intrinsic importance, and how much in later times it has exercised the minds of theologians—should have entered so little comparatively into the discussions and controversies of the earlier ages of Christianity. It had a very proximate relation to the many profound and intricate questions which, for successive generations, were debated, respecting the constitution of Christ's person; to those, also, which bore upon the application of His grace to the souls of men. And, incidentally, it does at times rise to the surface in the writings of the orthodox upon those collateral points; and even, when not formally exhibited, it can frequently be descried in the background, giving strength and earnestness to their contendings for the faith. But the doctrine itself of the atonement is not prominently brought into view, nor is it once distinctly and formally taken up as a subject of specific treatment, or prolonged investigation. No treatise exists on it in the whole body of patristic literature. And it is only when, after more than a thousand years, we reach the borders of the scholastic age, that we can lay our hands on a systematic explication of the doctrine, or anything like a regular defence and development of the idea involved in it, in their relation to the fundamental principles of the Divine government. This seeming disregard, however, cannot be ascribed to a prevailing ignorance or neglect

in regard to the doctrine itself. For that the revelation of it stands too prominently out on the pages of the New Testament Scripture, and the belief of it was too closely interwoven with whatever was most stirring, energetic, and healthful in the movements of the early Church. "The doctrine of man's reconciliation with God," so Baur rightly enunciates near the commencement of his work, "or of God's with man, is the centre of every religion. The general purpose which has to be made good in religion finds in the idea of the atonement its deepest and most inward signification." Nowhere, however, but in Christianity does it find this in a measure that can be deemed adequate and satisfactory. In the religions of ancient heathenism, men sighed and groped after a state of reconciliation with the Godhead, but never consciously found it. In Judaism it was found, indeed, but only in an imperfect form, and by means which left both the reason and the conscience in a state of relief rather than of proper satisfaction. But in Christianity, with its great facts of the personal incarnation of the Divine Word, the bearing away of human guilt by His sacrifice once for all upon the cross, His subsequent triumph over the power of death, and ascension in glorified humanity to the right hand of the Father: in this, believing men saw the gulf at length closed between heaven and earth; and in a method of reconciliation so firmly laid, and so wonderfully accomplished, they could rest in assured peace and well-grounded hope. So that, were the reality but granted of the incarnation itself, and of the great ends and purposes with which it is so palpably associated, there might well seem little room for further inquiry or disputation: all, in a manner, was won for which the world had been longing and striving without knowing how to reach it; and in a way perfectly consistent with the Divine holiness, as well as transcendently illustrative of Divine grace and condescension, the gloom that hung around man's condition had been dispelled, and the way opened for him into the very bosom of Deity.—*British and Foreign Review.*

2 The predisposing causes which naturally led the primitive Christians to unquestioningly accept the doctrine.

[12920] Let it only be considered, how near it lay to the early fathers to fall in, though it were but on comparatively slender grounds, with the notion of the atonement as a penalty and a satisfaction: their relations and training in heathenism had specially prepared them for it. The altars which they had there seen from their childhood receiving the blood of expiatory victims, were so many virtual confessions to men's conscious desert of punishment, and the need in which they stood of having satisfaction rendered to the offended justice of Heaven. Their religion was emphatically one of dread; and though there were not wanting on occasions gladsome eucharistical offerings, yet what chiefly drew the worshipper to the altar—what invariably did so in the most solemn moments of his history, was the conviction that the powers above were frowning down upon him in anger, and that by suitable piacular sacrifices he must seek to propitiate their favour. "Even the blithest Greek," says one of the most profound inquirers into the subject of ancient mythology, "could not but be sensible of a secret fear before each of his gods: in their working lay a sort of demoniacal agency. Every manifestation of a heathen deity had something fearfully strange about it (*unheimliches*, strange, and so alarming); and the felt nearness of the gods, even at the most joyous festivals, was accompanied with a sense of terror. People always felt themselves in the presence of a dark nature-power, on which they knew not how to reckon. Who could tell what the deity might suspend over him, an abject weak mortal! As the spring and the river freshen the atmosphere, invigorate plants, beasts, and men, but, at the same time, in the form of rushing torrents, overflow their banks, lay fields desolate, carry men and beasts along with them in their sweep, so could the unbounded might of the gods manifest itself at any moment in its most terrific outbursts." Hence also was it, that heathen sacrifice ever tended to the shedding of human blood as its proper culmination—nothing less being deemed, in moments of deeper conviction or more fearful apprehension, an offering of sufficient value to avert the judgment due to human guilt and disobedience. The grand difficulty, in fact, was, how to meet the demand raised in the conscience for satisfaction—a difficulty which heathenism was impotent to solve; so that while the bosom of the worshipper was ever and anon haunted by a sense of Divine wrath, the idea of Divine love might be said to be altogether foreign to it. What, then, we ask, must have been the case with men, enveloped in such an atmosphere, themselves trained under its influence, when, passing within the pale of the Christian Church, they heard, from the teaching of its sacred oracles, of the Son of God in human flesh, dying for human guilt, giving Himself as a propitiation for the sins of the world, and with the sacrifice of His own life purchasing reconciliation for men? What thought could take possession of their minds, but that here at length was the satisfaction to God's righteousness, so long desired and sought for, yet never found? If in the present age, when men are familiarized to the idea of God's grace and lovingkindness revealed in the gospel, they too often show an inclination to call in question the need of such an atonement—as if it were incompatible with the exercise of Divine love—in those ancient times the tendency must have been all the other way. Grant but the love, and men would feel that no more appropriate or thankworthy expression of it could be thought of, than that of providing, through a sacrifice of infinite worth, for the complete discharge of human guilt, and the permanent relief of troubled consciences.—*Ibid.*

3 Some of the leading enunciations of patristic theology.

(1) *Clement and Polycarp.*

[12921] For a considerable time, it is only in the form of illusions or brief remarks that the subject is made mention of; the great body of patristic literature for the first four centuries, being first of a practical nature, and then, when it becomes controversial, discussing topics only incidentally bearing on the character of Christ's death. Many of the passages, therefore, are not of themselves decisive either way; none belonging to what are called the apostolic fathers can fairly be reckoned such. Only, it is in accordance with the views already indicated, to find them ever and anon pointing to Christ's sufferings and death, as having in them a priceless value, and quoting the passages of Scripture, in particular Isa. liii., in which these are set forth. When Clement, in his epistle to the Corinthians, called upon his readers to "look stedfastly to the blood of Christ, which was shed for our salvation, and to consider how precious it was in the sight of God;" to reverence, as he again expresses it, "the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood was given for us;" and when Polycarp speaks of Jesus, as "having suffered Himself to be brought even unto death for our sins," or as "having borne our sins in His body on the tree:" the language of course might be explained so as to import something less than a vicarious and penal bearing of our sins on the cross, but read in the light of the ideas associated with ancient sacrifice, whether among Jews or Gentiles, it is most naturally regarded as conveying that sense. A greatly more explicit statement, however, meets us in a production, which is now commonly assigned to the period immediately subsequent to the apostolic age—the epistle to Diognetus. There it is said of God, "He Himself undertook our sins; Himself gave His own son a ransom (λύτρον) for us, the holy for the sinful.—*Ibid.*

(2) *Justin and Tertullian.*

[12922] Wherein is it possible for us, wicked and impious creatures, to be justified, except in the only Son of God? O sweet reconciliation! O untraceable ministry! O unlooked-for blessing! that the wickedness of many should be hidden in one godly and righteous man, and the righteousness of one justify a host of sinners!—*Justin Martyr.*

[12923] The whole race of men shall be found underlying the curse according to the law of Moses, for it is said, "Cursed is every one who does not continue in all things written in the book of the law to do them." And no one has exactly done all things, though there are those who have, more or less than others, kept what is commanded. But if those subject to the law appear to be under the curse, because they have not observed all its precepts, must not the Gentiles be much more so, who worship idols and do many abominable things? Therefore, if for men of every tribe the Father of all was minded that Christ should take upon Him the curses of all, knowing that He could raise Him after He had been crucified and dead, wherefore do ye make account of Him as accursed, who bore the suffering of such things according to the will of the Father? and do not rather bewail yourselves? For though both His Father and Himself effected that He should so suffer for the human race, yet ye did not, as of the mind of God, act your part in the matter. —*Ibid.*

[12924] It is said that the term "satisfactio" occurs, indeed, in Tertullian's writings, but in a sense essentially different from, and even opposed to, the idea of a sacrifice made by a substitute. True enough, no doubt, as regards the mere use of a term, which has sometimes been improperly pressed into the service by orthodox writers; and true also, as regards the general subject, in so far that there was no attempt in those earlier times to expound the satisfaction-theory by a laboured investigation of the reasons that could be brought in support of it, or of the objections to which on grounds of reason or propriety it might seem liable. But surely the theory might, as to its ground-elements, exist in men's Christian consciousness, and find substantial expression in their simple utterances of faith and hope, though not systematically arranged or elaborately wrought out; and in reality it was so held—it could not fail to be held—whenever the death of Christ was viewed in the light of a vicarious suffering or punishment for the sins of men, ordained and accepted by God. In that aspect of the matter, so distinctly and repeatedly presented in Scripture, *lies the heart and kernel of the satisfaction-theory.* Nor does anything more seem necessary to find it in, at least, the better writings of Christian antiquity, than to contemplate the passages bearing on it in the proper light, and to read them from the natural point of view.—*British and Foreign Review.*

(3) *Eusebius, Hilary, and Ambrose.*

[12925] Eusebius says of Christ (Dem. Ev. x. 1), "Being for us punished, and bearing the chastisement which He, indeed, deserved not, but which was due to us for the multitude of things we had done amiss, He became to us the procuring cause of the forgiveness of sins—drawing upon Himself the curse awarded to us, and becoming a curse for us." Hilary, of Poitiers, says, on Psa. liii. 12: "His suffering unto death was voluntarily undertaken, while it was going to satisfy a penal charge." Ambrose also (De Fuga, c. 7): "Jesus, therefore, took upon Him flesh, that He might abolish the curse of flesh, which sinned; and He was made for us a curse, that blessing might destroy the curse. He undertook death, that the sentence (viz. of death) might be fulfilled, that He might satisfy the judgment pronounced, in cursing the peccant flesh even unto death. Nothing, therefore, was done contrary to the mind of God, since the condition of the Divine sentence was fulfilled." In such

statements there is evidently much the same form of representation as those formerly adduced from earlier writers. What Baur, therefore, says of the one is really applicable to the whole : "The idea of satisfaction is at least expressed in them, and an occasion already given for the satisfaction-theory taking shape and form. . . . The elements of the theory meet us even now (meet us, we would say, from the first), although still in a scattered, not properly developed form. Among the particular representations especially deserving of notice in this respect is, along with the ideas of substitution and vicarious penal suffering, that which now began to be unfolded of an infinite worth in the passion of the God-man." This idea, however, was not wanting in the earlier writings, and is distinctly indicated in the epistle to Diognetus. —*Ibid.*

(4) *Athanasius and Augustine.*

[12926] Athanasius, in his work on the Incarnation, having spoken of the universal corruption and death which flowed from the fall, and its connection with the law of God, states that there was no possible recovery from the evil but through the Word : "For since the Word is of the Father, and is over all, He consequently alone was able to accomplish the restoration of all, and alone fit to suffer for all, and intercede for them with the Father." Again : "Having taken from us a like body, because all was subject to the corruption of death, He delivered it for all (*ἀντὶ πάντων*) to death, and presented it to the Father, acting therein after His own lovingkindness, in order that, since all died in Him, the law as to corruption in men might be abolished," &c. This presentation of His body, Athanasius, in the next section, calls "a victim and sacrifice free of all blemish," "a substitute for all (*ἀντίψυχον ὑπὲρ πάντων*) ; and so fulfilled by His death that which was due." The same thoughts substantially are again reiterated in other places, and the necessity urged of Christ's being made a curse *for* us, in order that He might take away the curse *from* us. These things are sufficiently explicit on the great points at issue ; and yet they are associated with a good deal that is defective and fanciful in the mode of exhibition ; so that here, as so generally happens in regard to the writings of the fathers, one must look to the substance of their views, rather than to the explanations and reasons with which these are accompanied, if one would deal fairly by their doctrinal position. In the treatise just referred to, its great author confined his view far too exclusively to the mere bodily death of Christ, and its relation to men's subjection to the law of mortality ; giving thereby such a ground and colour to the heresy of Apollinaris, that had he not lived to utter personally his repudiation of it, he might not unnaturally have been thought disposed to lean in that direction. And then, among his reasons for Christ's death by crucifixion, rather than any other mode, we find him pressing such considerations as these, that thus the Lord's arms were extended with a view to His embracing in His mediation both Jews and Gentiles, and that, being lifted up into the air, He thereby purged the air as the seat of demoniacal power. One must make allowance for such things ; they are incidental and subsidiary ; and though they mar the completeness, they do not alter the essential nature of the argument, in which the atonement is contemplated mainly with reference to the law of God, and as involving the ideas of vicarious obedience and penal satisfaction.—*Ibid.*

[12927] Augustine, as might be expected from the character of his mind, is even more full and explicit on the subject of the atonement than Athanasius, though not without similar excrescences. To say nothing of many passages, which speak generally of the preciousness of Christ's blood, and of the redemption purchased by it, we find him writing more particularly thus : "Being naturally a mass of sin, we have become a mass of wrath. It seemed, however, good to Him to redeem us in His mercy with so great a price. He gave for us the blood of His only-begotten Son, who was born in innocence, lived in innocence, died in innocence. He who has bought us at so great a cost does not wish those whom He has bought to perish (vol. v., ser. xxii.). In connection with the passage so often referred to in Galatians iii. 13, he says (Contra Faust, xiv. 6), "He disdained not to undertake the curse which accompanies death —even He, who, as God's Son, was always alive in His own righteousness, but dead on account of our delinquencies, which by reason of our punishment were taken up into His flesh. Thus and always blessed in His own righteousness, but cursed on account of our faults, which were borne in death for our punishment." Many similar passages might be quoted . . . where, speaking of Christ's death as a sacrifice, he shows how all the conditions of a true and availing sacrifice met in it, viz., that it was offered to the one true God by a holy and righteous priest, for the purpose of reconciling sinners to God and purging away their sins. It is true that he has laid himself open to censure by certain other statements in which he has exhibited the redemptive aspect of the atonement with reference to Satan's dominion over fallen mankind.[1] But it is clear from the references now given that, according to Augustine, the *primary* object of the atonement had to do with man's relation to God, and that its aim was accomplished by setting this right through a vicarious sacrifice of unspeakable worth, ordained by God, and trusted in by sinful men. All else, in his view, must have been subsidiary, and connected merely with economical arrangements.—*Ibid.*

[1] N.B.—It was Origen who debased the doctrine of the atonement by his fanciful views of the relation of Christ's work to the devil. This absurd notion was carried to a great extravagance by later fathers, *e.g.*, Gregory of Nyssa (A.D. 370), who says in substance that the devil was cheated in the transaction by a just retaliation for his deception of men. Athanasius rejected the fanciful Satan theory.—*C. N.*

X. Force of the Preposition "for" (ὑπερ) in its Bearing on the Nature of Atonement (see John x. 11; Rom. v. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 21).

[12928] The whole force of the argument, it is said, turns upon the meaning of the word "for," here. If that word necessarily signifies "in our room," or "instead of us," it would be difficult to resist the interpretation which our brethren are anxious to put upon these passages. But such is not the case. There are in the Greek language, which is the original language of the New Testament, several particles which are indifferently translated by this little word "for." One of these particles (ἀντι) generally signifies, in the room or stead of another. But the particle is never used in the New Testament when the sacred writers speak of Christ as "having died for men." The words which they actually use (προ, ὑπερ) have a much more comprehensive signification, and imply what, indeed, all Christians believe, and none more sincerely than we, that Christ died for the good of men, in their cause, or on their account. This fact ought to settle the question, so far as it depends on the interpretation of these texts. The sacred writers had it in their power to employ a phrase which, in its obvious meaning, would have expressed the doctrine of vicarious punishment, but they have never once employed it. This is certainly, although a verbal, yet a tangible argument, and, were the concluding statement perfectly accurate, a strong one; but, unfortunately for those who employ it, fact is opposed to their so positive assertion. I might remark on the propriety of Scripture language in the preference given to the particles above quoted (προ, ὑπερ), above that one (ἀντι) the use of which, as it is alleged, would decide the question. In the case of the last-mentioned one (ἀντι), every Greek scholar knows that its employment suggests an *exchange* and an *equivalent;* and where we have, on the one side, man and his interests, created and finite, though everlasting, and, on the other, the merits, death, and their results, of one who is the Son of God, and therefore God, and "in the beginning with God," we can readily perceive that the other class of expressions, and the use of the terms which have been employed, more accurately express the mystery of redeeming love, when He, who was above and beyond all price and calculation, so "gave Himself for us." But not to insist on this view, or to enlarge on the striking propriety in the use of Scripture terms which it suggests, I ask the question, Is it, indeed, a fact that the so-much-desired and appropriate term (ἀντι) is never so employed? Strange to say, it needs but a very slight amount of research to evidence the contrary. In one passage, from the apostle's writings, we have this term in composition, and employed with exactly the meaning which is in dispute. St. Paul thus writes of the Saviour (1 Tim. ii. 6), "Who gave Himself a ransom for all" (ἀντιλυτρον), to be testified in due time. But, more distinctly still, our Lord Himself, on one occasion, twice recorded by the Evangelists (Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45), when foretelling His death, voluntarily to be undergone, refers to it in the following remarkable terms: "Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (λυτρον ἀντι πολλων). Could any quotation more directly negative the assertion made as to the language employed in the New Testament respecting the death of our Lord, or more utterly upturn the argument attempted to be raised thereupon?—*Rev. Wm. MacIlwaine, A.M.*

XI. General Objections to Vicarious Atonement considered.

1 As advanced by Unitarians and others.

[12929] In "The Creed of an Arian" we find the following: "I do not believe, with the Calvinist, in the doctrine of vicarious atonement, or, in other words, that the sins of men were imputed or transferred to Christ, who suffered in their room and stead, to render God placable to Divine justice. I do not believe this, because guilt is personal and cannot be transferred. Punishment might be inflicted on the innocent instead of the guilty, but this would not remove the stain of moral turpitude from the offender; and, instead of satisfying justice, it would, in itself, be essentially unjust. Were a human tribunal to permit convicted criminals to escape the penalties justly due to their offences, and to punish innocent and virtuous men in their room, would not the whole world exclaim against such a violation of the plainest principles of equity? Yet such is the charge imputed against the Deity in Calvinistic creeds! I do not, therefore, believe in their doctrine of satisfaction, because it impeaches the justice of God; and I further reject it because it robs Him of His mercy and free grace. If justice be satisfied, mercy has no act to perform; and if the debt be paid, the gift of pardon cannot be free. Besides, to allege that God is not placable is to deny the most adorable perfections of His nature, to say that He is not Love, and to deprive Him of the praise and glory to which He is justly entitled, as the beneficent Author of the all-merciful plan of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer."

[12930] Concerning the language of the above extract, it is, perhaps, unnecessary to observe on the incorrectness of applying the name of Calvinistic to any other creed than that of the Genevan Reformer, and those who are his followers. In regard to the doctrines under review, they are held by the United Church of England and Ireland totally irrespective of the views and opinions of Calvin, as being in accordance with Scripture, and therefore believed in common by the Catholic Church of all ages. —*Rev. Wm. MacIlwaine, A.M.*

[12931] Among other assertions respecting our views, it is stated that we "cannot find a

single text, from Genesis to Revelation, that will clearly and unmistakably express our doctrine." This is, indeed, a wholesale declaration, but it can be most easily met. In the work of Archbishop Magee on the Atonement, not to mention other authorities, no fewer than twenty-five texts are given, in one reference, as fully bearing upon the subject, and testifying to the fact that Christ died for the sins of the world, in the sense of being a sacrifice for those sins, and as a substitute, bearing the guilt of the transgressors. To quote these at length would not be necessary: a few, as specimens, may suffice.

Thus, for example, writes the prophet Isaiah (ch. liii. vers. 3-6): "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken of God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions: He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed."

You will remember that this passage is applied to our Lord and to His death on two separate inspired authorities in the New Testament (Acts viii. 32–37; 1 Pet. i. 19), and can any person of unbiassed judgment doubt the import of such expressions? "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all"—"the chastisement of our peace was upon Him—with His stripes we are healed." Can such expressions, in their undistorted meaning, imply anything but substitution of the Saviour in the stead of sinners? and so the Saviour Himself declares (Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45) that He came "to give His life a ransom for many." The Apostle Paul testifies that "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25); that "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. xv. 7). Similar are the declarations of the Apostles Peter and John, and such a line of testimony is continued throughout the entire New Testament, until, by faith, we may hear the song of the ransomed, in heaven above, re-echoing the thankful acknowledgment of the Church below, in ascribing all praise and glory to the Lamb slain, who "had redeemed them by His blood" (Rev. v. 9, 12).—*Ibid.*

[12932] Dr. Priestley, although he professes ("Theol. Rep." vol. i. p. 125) to collect "*all* the texts in which Christ is represented as a sacrifice, either expressly, or by plain reference," has not been able to find so many to this purpose (*i.e.*, as referred to in above extract). After the most careful research, he could discover but a very few; and of these he remarks, that "the greater part are from one Epistle, which is allowed in other respects to abound with the strongest figures, metaphors, and allegories:" and these being rejected, "the rest," he says, "are too few to bear the very great stress that has been laid upon them"—and thus they are all discarded with one sweeping remark, that they carry with them the air of figure, and that had Christ's death been considered as the intended antitype of the sacrifices under the law, this would have been asserted in the fullest manner, and would have been more frequently referred to. We are here furnished with an instance of the most expeditious and effectual method of evading the authority of Scripture. First, overlook a considerable majority, and particularly of the strongest texts, that go to support the doctrine you oppose; in the next place, assert that, of the remainder, a large proportion belongs to a particular writer, whom you think proper to charge with metaphor, allegory, &c.; then object to the residue, as too few on which to rest any doctrine of importance, but, lest even these might give some trouble in the examination, explode them at once with the cry of figure, &c. This is the treatment that Scripture too frequently receives from those who choose to call themselves rational and enlightened commentators.—*Abp. Magee.*

[12933] Abandoning for hopeless all attempts to trace the steps in the growth of heathen sacrifices, we may turn first to those striking cases in which men are represented as laying down their own lives, consciously and freely, for the sake of their fellow-men. And here our object is to examine what men thought, what they could admire and record, rather than what took place—in fact, it is needless to criticise the narratives closely, and to sift the historical from the mythological portions. When we are told that Codrus, the Athenian king, gave up his life to the Dorian invaders, because an oracle had made that the conditions of the repulse of the enemy, the points on which we seize, whether the story be true or false, are the belief, even among pagans, that some "would even dare to die" for their fellow-men, the opinion that such heroic devotion might be effectual, and the honour deservedly paid to the memory of one whose sympathies were so deep and large. It is the same with the fate of Menœceus of Thebes, who fell by his own hand, because a Divine sanction connected that sacrifice with the safety of his city. A temple commemorated the self-devotion of the daughters of Orion, in offering their lives to arrest a plague, and the Dorians brought them yearly thank-offerings. In the Latin war, at the battle near Vesuvius, Publius Decius, in obedience to a vision, devoted himself to death, in order to secure the destruction of the Latin army and the victory of his own. With a solemn imprecation, prescribed by the priest, he rushed among the enemy, "a majesty more than human visible in his form," says the narrator, "as though he were sent from heaven to expiate all the anger of the gods, to turn away destruction from his countrymen, by casting it upon their enemies." From such stories, and they might be multiplied, even the soberest reasoner must infer that the highest proof of love, that a man lay down his life for his friends, was conceivable in the darkest times of human intelligence, and that it seemed more than possible such offerings should avail in averting calamities. Yes; that mysterious sympathy—which in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

did, in fact, gather in all the separate items of men's sin and suffering into one great sheaf, and bear its enormous weight, and lay it on the altar of God, that sympathy under which an apostle "could wish that himself were accursed from Christ for his brethren," if this could turn and save them, was foreshadowed in these acts of love; and the honours and gratitude that they elicited are an earnest of the higher feeling with which the Christian regards the sufferings of his Lord. Call them, if you will, barbarous superstitions, for, indeed, the oracles were false, and the piacular blood was poured out in vain; but do not mock at the notion of a substitutive suffering, nor propose to carry the crude principles of human justice into the Divine economy, urging that each individual must stand alone, without advocate or comforter, to be judged at God's bar for all his works; for the stammering lips of the human race in its childhood will rebuke you.—*Rev. W. Thomson.*

[12934] On any theory of atonement you cannot get rid of the admission that the innocent suffers for the guilty. The principle of vicarious suffering is inevitably involved in the fact that the guilty do get benefit from what the innocent endure. The direction in which the principle worked—whether outwardly or inwardly—on the relations of government, or on the dispositions of the governed, is a question subsequent to the recognition of the principle itself.—*Prof. Chapman.*

[12935] It has been objected that in many places the Scriptures mention forgiveness without connecting it with the satisfaction or propitiation of Christ. What then? Would that destroy the connection so often expressed elsewhere? He is "set forth a propitiation . . . for the remission of sins." "Without shedding of blood is no remission." "Thus it behoved the Christ to suffer, . . . and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations." If elsewhere the atonement be not named in immediate association with forgiveness, how can such omission invalidate the evidence of those passages in which the connection is so explicit? In Eph. i. 4 the apostle closely connects "forgiveness of sins" with "redemption through His blood." In Col. i. 14 He omits "through His blood." The just inference is that the "forgiveness" in the latter passage is as closely connected with "His blood" as the "forgiveness" in the former.

The test set up by this objection is a weapon which if sound would equally destroy the theory of those who wield it. Apply it to that in which repentance is the sole ground of pardon, and the passages on forgiveness which say nothing of repentance would be fatal to the theory, *e.g.*, in addition to some already quoted, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." "My blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins." "To give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins." "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." On all sides, it is agreed, there could have been no forgiveness without the benevolence of God. And yet in many texts which speak of forgiveness no mention is made of Divine goodness. The schools of Priestley, Channing, Robertson, Maurice, Jowett, Young, Campbell, Bushnell, and all who have set up rival theories against substitution would fail to find, in every text where pardon is noticed, what they respectively declare to be the ground of pardon.

The truth is, one condition does not exclude another unless they be mutually opposed. The love of God, the sacrifice of Christ, repentance, and faith, are all, in different ways, conditions of pardon, and perfectly compatible with each other; but to demand that each and all shall be mentioned whenever forgiveness is spoken of, is to set up a canon of interpretation as unfounded in reason as it would be absurd in its results.—*Marshall Randles.*

[12936] Those who say that Christ's sufferings were not vicarious will have to fight, not only with the Bible, but with all the weight of human life. Suffering, in human life, is very widely vicarious.—*Beecher.*

[12937] Hard pressed by the words of Scripture, it is not uncommon for those who embrace the nudest "moral" theories to seek refuge in loose ideas of the consistency and authority of revelation. For example, Professor Jowett says: "The Old Testament is not on all points the same with the New, for 'Moses allowed some things for the hardness of their hearts;' nor the Law with the Prophets, for there were 'proverbs in the house of Israel' that were reversed; nor does the Gospel, which is simple and universal, in all respects agree with the Epistles, which have reference to the particular state of the first converts; nor is the teaching of St. James, who admits works as a co-efficient with faith in the justification of man, absolutely identical with that of St. Paul, who asserts righteousness by faith only; nor is the character of all the Epistles of St. Paul, written as they were at different times, amid the changing scenes of life, precisely the same; nor does he himself claim an equal authority for all his precepts." "If we can introduce the New Testament into the Old, we may with equal right introduce tradition, or Church history, into the New." "Nor can we allow that the Gospel is to be interpreted by the Epistles." Again, Dr. Priestley says: "Upon a careful examination of these and other texts produced for the commonly received doctrine of atonement, it must be granted that some do seem to represent the pardon of sin as dispensed in consideration of something else than our repentance, or personal virtue; and according to their literal sense, the pardon of sin is, in some way or other, procured by Christ. And had the literal represen-

tation been all of a piece, had the sacred writers uniformly represented God the Father as dispensing the pardon of sin to penitent offenders, in consideration either of the sufferings or of the merit of Christ our only intercessor, the account would have had more of the air and consistency, at least, of truth. But when the pardon of sin is sometimes represented as dispensed in consideration of the sufferings, sometimes of the merit, sometimes of the resurrection, and even of the life and obedience of Christ; that it is sometimes Christ, and sometimes the Spirit, that intercedes for us; that the dispensing of pardon is sometimes said to be the proper act of God the Father; and again, that it is Christ who forgives us—we can hardly hesitate in concluding that these must be severally partial representations, in the nature of figures and allusions, which, at proper distances, are allowed to be inconsistent, without any charge of impropriety in the style of the composition."

These examples are quoted, not for the purpose of refuting their positions in detail, but to note (1) that those who had ability and will to disprove, had it been possible, that forgiveness by the sacrificial death of Christ is taught in Scripture, are obliged to confess it is there. (2) That to attempt to evade the doctrine by lowering the authority of the Scriptures as a self-consistent revelation from God, is to put themselves out of court; for if Scripture is to be so dealt with, no doctrine can be securely based upon it. (3) That the inference of "figures and allusions" has no sort of foundation in the fact that forgiveness is, at different times, ascribed to its different causes, nor does it afford any explanation of the fact. And (4) that if the fact neutralized one of the several causes, it would equally neutralize them all—the Unitarian as effectually as the Evangelical. But in truth it is simply preposterous to object to *any* cause of salvation for the reason that it is not expressly referred to in every instance where the effect is mentioned.—*Marshall Randles.*

[12938] Starr King, one of the most eloquent champions of the Socinians, paid the following tribute to the doctrine of the vicarious atonement: "It is embodied by the holiest of memories, as it has been consecrated by the loftiest talent of Christendom. It fired the fierce eloquence of Tertullian in the early Church, and gushed in honeyed periods from the lips of Chrysostom; it enlisted the life-long zeal of Athanasius to keep it pure; the sublimity of it fired every power, and commanded all the resources of the mighty soul of Augustine; the learning of Jerome and the energy of Ambrose were committed to its defence; it was the text for the subtle eye and analytic thought of Aquinas; it was the pillar of Luther's soul, toiling for man; it was shapen into intellectual proportions and systematic symmetry by the iron logic of Calvin; it inspired the beautiful humility of Fenelon; fostered the devotion and self-sacrifice of Oberlin; flowed like molten metal into the rigid forms of Edwards's intellect, and kindled the deep and steady rapture of Wesley's heart. . . . All the great enterprises of Christian history have been born from the influence, immediate or remote, which the vicarious theory of redemption has exercised upon the mind and heart of humanity."

[12939] We hear it urged, "How can it be righteous to lay on one man the penalties of others?" Surely we must feel that the question, to be effectually answered, needs only to be more accurately put; that the form which it ought to assume is this: How can it be righteous for one man to take upon himself the penalties of others? and none who remember the "Lo! I come!" of the Saviour, the willing sacrifice of our Isaac, prefigured by his who climbed so meekly, in his father's company, the hill of Moriah—none, I say, who remember this, will deny our right to make this change; while surely the whole aspect of the question is now, by this little change, altered altogether. For how many an act of heroic self-sacrifice, which it would be most unrighteous for others to demand from, or force on, one reluctant, which, indeed, would cease to be heroism or sacrifice at all, unless wholly self-imposed, is yet most glorious when one has offered himself thereunto; is only not righteous, because it is so much better than righteous, because it moves in that higher region where law is no more known, but only known no more because it has been transfigured into love. Wherein else is the chief glory of history but in those deeds of self-devotion, of heroic self-offering, which, like trumpet tones sounding from the depths of the past, rouse us, at least for a while, from the selfish dream of life to a nobler existence; and of which, if the mention has become trite and common now, it has only become so because the grandeur of them has caused them to be evermore in the hearts and on the lips of men. "Vicarious suffering!"—it is strange to hear the mighty uproar which is made about it; when, indeed, in lower forms—not low in themselves, though low as compared with the highest—it is everywhere where love is at all. For, indeed, is not this, of one freely taking on himself the consequence of others' faults, and thus averting from those others, at least in part, the penalties of the same, building what others have thrown down, gathering what others have scattered, bearing the burdens which others have wrapped together, healing the wounds which others have inflicted, paying the things which he never took, smarting for sins which he never committed—is not this, I say, the law and condition of all highest nobleness in the world?—is not that it which God is continually demanding of His elect, they approving themselves His elect, as they do not shrink from this demand, as they freely own themselves the debtors of love to the last requirements which it makes? And if these things are so, shall we question the right of God Himself to display this nobleness which He demands of His creatures? Shall we wish

to rob Him of the opportunity, or think to honour Him who is highest love, by denying Him the right to display it?—*Trench.*

XII. Reality of the Atonement.

1 Proved by the reality of Christ's priesthood.

[12940] The reality of Christ's priesthood, and consequently of His atonement, is evident from the covenant of redemption. In that covenant it was stipulated that He should take upon Him the nature of those whom He was to save; that in this nature He should be a servant, and yield obedience to His Father; and that because the typical sacrifices of the law possessed no intrinsic value, He should Himself suffer and undergo all that was due to His people. The principal work which was prescribed to Him was that of a priest, to make atonement for sin by the offering up of Himself a sacrifice to God. Having been constituted a real priest, it was necessary that He should offer to God a real sacrifice. But this could not be any of the sacrifices which were common to the Levitical priesthood; for these, though numerous, and offered daily, occasionally, and annually, had no intrinsic efficacy to take away sins. The sacrifice which He offered was Himself—an oblation as far superior to the sacrifices of the law as the priesthood of Christ was superior to that of Aaron. They answered ends worthy of the Divine wisdom by affording a lively representation of the method in which the new and better covenant between the Father and the Son secures the redemption of man; and of the sufferings of the Redeemer to be undergone in the fulness of time, when He should make atonement by the offering up of Himself. They were typical of His real substitution in our room, and of His giving His life a ransom for us.—*D. Dewar, D.D.*

2 Proved by the agony of Gethsemane.

[12941] The circumstances by which the sufferings of our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane were characterized, proved that these sufferings were of a nature peculiar to Himself—that is, that they were expiatory of sin. . . . The withdrawment of comfort, and the confinement of the mind to what is distressing and painful, are circumstances which constitute extreme misery. The blessed Jesus, while in the garden of Gethsemane, appears to have been in such circumstances, to have had presented to His mind impressive views of the holiness and justice of God, of the satisfaction due to His offended government and law, and the evil and the odiousness of those sins which He had engaged to expiate. He saw and felt the infinite wrong which had been done to the authority of God by the disobedience of mankind, and the greatness of that expiation which was necessary as an adequate atonement; while, at the same time, He had such a sense of Divine wrath, and the punishment deserved by the sins of men, as overwhelmed His soul, and produced the agony which He experienced. He was bearing the wrath of God, and was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. Without the comfort of His Father's presence, His view was fixed, and to an extent inconceivable to us, on what was painful and distressing. His sufferings formed the punishment due to the offences of millions of souls—a punishment which the God of infinite perfection was now in a mysterious manner inflicting on His own Son, because He stood in our room. The darkness of death enveloped the Redeemer; and it was not till justice was satisfied, the wrath of God appeased, and the law was magnified and made honourable, that the light of consolation and joy penetrated the gloom.—*Ibid.*

[12942] The manner in which He anticipated His death when it was still remote, the increasing terror which it created in His mind as it gradually drew nearer, and the mystery of His moral sufferings while on the cross, appear to require some such explanation as is supplied by the doctrine of the atonement.—*R. W. Dale, D.D.*

XIII. Its Extent.

1 Considered as to three aspects.

(1) *The scheme of exact equivalent.*

[12943] This is a view according to which the expiatory sufferings of the Redeemer possessed just as much of atoning virtue, or substitutionary worth, as was an equivalent—neither less nor more—for the merited punishment of all who shall ultimately be saved by it; whose precise proportion of deserved wrath He is conceived to have borne, measured out with minute exactness, even according to the guilt of every individual sin. This scheme has, indeed, ever appeared to me infinitely derogatory to the majesty of the Godhead, and to the divinity of the mediatorial substitute; bringing down the transcendent magnificence of the plan of mercy to a matter of mercantile calculation, of debtor and creditor account. It introduces the principles of *commutative* justice, where they have nothing to do; or it overstrains those of *retributive* justice in a case which is beyond their range, and, although throughout consistent with them, yet quite above their legitimate application. On the ground of the infinite worth of the Redeemer's sacrifice, arising from the divinity of His person, limitation in sufficiency becomes, in the nature of things, an impossibility. If the atonement was in its nature Divine, then was it in its nature unlimited; and they who adopt the theory of exact equivalent must undertake the contradictory task of limiting infinitude.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

(2) *The scheme of infinite sufficiency, but definite intention or limited destination.*

[12944] Here the infinite worth of the Me-

diator's sacrifice is distinctly and strongly admitted; but limitation is contended for, as lying in the Divine destination of the atonement made by that sacrifice; that is, Christ was appointed, and voluntarily undertook, to stand in the room of a certain number, and for them and for them alone, the propitiation by His death, though in itself of boundless value, was made.—*Ibid.*

[12945] On the extent of Christ's atonement, the two opinions that have long divided the Church are expressed by the terms definite and indefinite. The former means, that Christ died, satisfied Divine justice, and made atonement, only for such as are saved. The latter means, that Christ died, satisfied Divine justice, or made atonement, for all mankind without exception, as well those who are not saved as those who are. The one regards the death of Christ as a legal satisfaction to the law and justice of God, on behalf of elect sinners; the other regards it as a general moral vindication of the Divine government, without respect to those to whom it may be rendered effectual, and of course equally applicable to all.—*Dr. Symington.*

[12946] It is admitted that all are not delivered from the punishment of sin, that there are many who perish in final condemnation. We are, therefore, compelled to infer that for them no satisfaction has been given to the claims of Divine justice, no atonement has been made. If this is denied, the monstrous impossibility must be maintained, that the infallible Judge refuses to remit the punishment of some, for whose offences He has received a full compensation; that He finally condemns some, the price of whose deliverance has been paid to Him; that with regard to the sins of some of mankind, He seeks satisfaction in their personal punishment, after having obtained satisfaction for them in the sufferings of Christ; that is to say, that an infinitely righteous God takes double payment for the same debt, double satisfaction for the same offence—first from the surety, and then from those for whom the surety stood bound.—*Ibid.*

(3) *The scheme of indefinite or universal atonement, with gracious sovereignty in its effectual application.*

[12947] If, after all, it be true that by such expressions as these—"the world," "the whole world," "all men," "every man"—God means only the elect, how comes it to pass that equally extensive terms (that is, with those used respecting atonement) are not employed in speaking of *election* and *justification?* If these two and the *atonement* be really co-extensive, how do we never read that God *elected* "the world," and "the whole world," and "all men," and "every man,"—and *justified* "the world," and "the whole world," and "all men," and "every man"? Limitarians allow that the one might be said as well as the other; and how comes it to pass, then, that it is never said? Not only must this be accounted for, but on the face of the case there appears so plain and palpable a difference between the extent of atonement and the extent of election and justification, and the sudden identification of these is so preposterous, that, unless a solid and decisive demonstration be given of their co-extensiveness, the system of limitation falls to the ground, and the universal atonement comes to be received as a matter of course. There is so vast a difference between the language that describes atonement, and that which describes election and justification, in point of extent; and the general easy unrestrained meaning of Scripture teaches so plainly the unlimited propitiation by Christ's blood, that it can never be displaced except by solid and irrefragable proof of direct limitation. —*Robert Morison, D.D.*

[12948] It would evidently be the height of absurdity to suppose Christ to say that "God so loved the world—in the sense of the elect in the world—that whosoever" (of those previously mentioned of course) "believeth in Him should not perish"—that being a position which would imply that some of the elect might not believe, and might thus incur perdition! Now, as this would be the height of absurdity, "the world" that is represented as the object of God's love requires (if we would make any sense of the passage at all) to be interpreted as of more extensive comprehensiveness than the elect. And this clearly settles the sense of the same word, when it is immediately added—"that the world through Him might be saved;"—the sentiment expressed being plainly this, that salvation might be provided for the world, while the general provision was to be effectual to salvation only in the case of those who believed.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

[See "ELECTION," Division C.]

XIV. ITS PRACTICAL TENDENCY AND MORAL EFFICACY.

1 To incite to the practice of duty from a motive of gratitude.

[12949] Who can feel the debt of obligation so deeply as those who are sensible that they are not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which have been shown them, and who look for eternal life, not as the reward of personal merit, but as the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord? Who can be so capable of feeling the value of the great salvation as they who are convinced that without it they are under condemnation, and must have remained in a helpless and hopeless condition? Can they ever cease to feel and to show their thankfulness and love who have some experience of the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven; who know the evil and the fearful consequences of sin—the claims of that Divine justice which they had provoked, and which could not be compromised—the numerous barriers which were in the way of their restoration to the favour of God, but which are now removed

by the gracious interposition of the God of mercy? Does not every circumstance unite in the redemption in Christ Jesus which is calculated to awaken and to keep alive the affection of gratitude and the expression of praise? The inquiries spontaneously arise, What shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards us? How can we sufficently show our abhorrence of that iniquity which He hates, and our love to that holiness in which He delights? When He has bestowed such great mercies upon us, shall not we present ourselves living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service? "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that He died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but to Him who died for them, and who rose again."—*D. Dewar, D.D.*

[12950] It were easy to prove, by the most incontestable evidence, that it is the doctrine of the cross alone which obtains the victory over the corruption which is in man, and which is in the world. We might appeal to facts, numerous and undeniable, for the confirmation of this position. But in order to do any measure of justice to this view of our subject, it would be necessary to go over a field on which it is impossible for us at present to enter. We may however note the words of the apostle: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world."—*Ibid.*

2 To reveal the nature of sin from the spectacle of infinite love.

[12951] The law can do no more than proclaim the guilt, and set before us the penalty of transgression. It may terrify us with the consequences of sin, but it can work no change in the affections. It may occasionally restrain us from the commission of sin, but it has no power to render sin itself odious; and, until this be done, the moral nature of the man is unchanged. The Gospel, on the contrary, whilst it asserts that the law is holy and the commandment holy, and just, and good, presents to us the spectacle of the Son of God offering Himself up as a propitiation for our sins. It tells us that the Word, who was in the beginning with God, who was God, without whom was not anything made that was made, assumed our nature, bore our infirmities, received the stroke that must have smitten us to perdition, and thus by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for us. Before, we saw the evil of sin only in the terrors of the penalty with which it threatened us; now, we see it in the fact that nothing less than such an atonement, and by such an High Priest, could have rendered our ransom possible. If anything can, with emphasis, exhibit to us the odiousness of sin, it is the spectacle of such a Saviour suffering, that sinners, such as we, might hope for pardon.—*Wayland.*

[12952] Where does sin appear so foul and repulsive as in the light of the cross? Beholding how the Son of God, rather than let it run on unchecked in its deleterious course, deemed His incarnation, ignominy, agony, and death not too great a cost to render our escape from it possible, we gain our deepest impression of the exceeding heinousness of its nature. Let the vicarious suffering of Christ, borne because sin was so exceedingly offensive to justice, be put aside in favour of the "moral" theory which can dispose of the penalty of sin without more ado than a simple volition of the Sovereign, or a tragic demonstration against it, and our estimate of the evil is at once greatly diminished. It is natural to reason that if the evil were so great that God Himself could only counteract it by means so extraordinary, there must have appeared to His eye a degree of badness far surpassing the badness of anything which could be cleared away by the utterance of a word, or an exhibition of pity. In proportion as we measure the evil of sin by the method adopted to remove its awful curse, we are likely to loathe our association with it, and long for deliverance.—*Marshall Randles.*

XV. Its Infinite Value and Sufficiency.

1 Proved and attested by the resurrection of Christ, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the satisfaction of God the Father in the work of God the Son.

[12953] God has testified His satisfaction with the atonement of Christ by His raising Him from the dead. This was a proof of the sufficiency and satisfactory nature of His offering—that the debt was fully paid, that He was now judicially discharged, and that none who should be united to Him would experience the penalty of transgression. By the resurrection of Christ it is declared that truth is not on the side of those who charged Him with blasphemy because He said, I am the Son of God, but on His who had averred that the end for which He came into the world was to give His life a ransom for many.

The effusion of the influences of the Spirit is a proof of the sufficiency of the atonement. If the sacrifice of Christ had not possessed infinite value and efficacy, He could not have entered into heaven, and have sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; and if He had not gone to the Father, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, would not have come unto us. If God could in no way more strongly show His love to the world than in the gift of His Son, in no way could He more fully testify His delight and satisfaction in the work which His Son had finished than by sending a Divine Messenger to convince the world of sin, and to bear witness to His infinite worth. The circumstance that this oblation satisfied perfections that are infinite

proves conclusively that it possesses infinite virtue and value, and that its efficacy is sufficient for an infinite number of persons. The Redeemer commanded that repentance and the remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations; and though all mankind had availed themselves of the offer of salvation, there is ample merit to procure their pardon and acceptance. In short, the infinite efficacy of the atonement is the great theme of the New Testament. Its boundless value is attested by the fact that God is well pleased.—*D. Dewar, D.D.*

XVI. Substitution in Relation to Reconciliation.

[12954] It is evident that the writers who have founded their objection against the propitiation of the Divinity, on the use of the word *reconciled* in the New Testament, have attended rather to the force of the term, as applied in the language of the translation, than in that of the original. But, even without looking beyond the translation, it seems surprising that the context did not correct their error; since that clearly determines the sense, not only in Matt. v. 24, where it is perfectly obvious and unequivocal, but also in 2 Cor. v. 19, in which the manner of reconciling the world to God is expressly described, viz., His not imputing their trespasses unto them, that is, His granting them forgiveness. There are, upon the whole, but five places in the New Testament, in which the term is used with respect to God: Rom. v. 10, and xi. 15; 2 Cor. v. 18–20; Eph. ii. 16, and Col. i. 20, 21. Whoever will take the trouble of consulting Hammond and Whitby on these passages will be satisfied that the application is diametrically opposite to that for which the Socinian writers contend. There are but two places besides in which the term occurs, Matt. v. 24, and 1 Cor. vii. 11, in both of which the application is clear. And it deserves to be particularly noticed that Dr. Sykes ("Script. Doct. of Redemp." p. 57) sinks the former passage altogether, and notices the latter alone, asserting that this is the only one, in which the word is used, not in relation to the reconciliation of the world to God; and this, after having inadvertently stated in the preceding page that there were two such passages. This will appear the less unaccountable when it is considered that the expression, as applied in Matthew, could be got rid of by no refinement whatever, but that the application in 1 Corinthians (not, indeed, in our translation, which is not sufficiently explicit, but examined in the original) will appear as little friendly to his exposition, Hammond and Le Clerc have abundantly evinced by their interpretation of the passage. —*Bp. Magee.*

[12955] God is King of kings and Lord of lords, whose heart of infinite love leads Him to be "in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." The plan of salvation, though wrought out in Christ, was designed from all eternity by the Father, and is as simple as it is glorious. The death of Christ, voluntarily undergone, makes a full, perfect, and complete atonement for the sins of the human race, while the work of the risen Saviour and the gift of the Spirit afford ample securities for the future glory and ultimate perfection of the redeemed. Hence, for fallen man to be at one with the Father, he has only, by the Spirit's influence, to lay down the arms of rebellion, to take the pardon graciously proffered, and to receive the reconciliation effected by the meritorious cross and passion of our Saviour.—*C. N.*

[12956] It is well remarked in the "Theological Repository," by a writer under the signature *Verus*, that the laying aside our enmity to God must be a necessary qualification for, though without constituting the formal nature of, our reconciliation to God. This judicious distinction places the matter in a fair light. That God will not receive us into favour so long as we are at enmity with Him, is most certain; but that thence it should be inferred that, on laying aside our enmity, we are necessarily restored to His favour, is surely an odd instance of logical deduction.—*Bp. Magee.*

[12957] We—the whole race of men, present and to come unto the end—being enemies —*i.e.*, at the very time — were reconciled to God (not by any change of will, or by anything in us, but) by the death of His Son (Rom. v. 10). And in this state Christ made peace for us. Christ reconciled us, not (as some have said) only by reconciling our wills to God (although this followed), but, according to a known use of the word, we were "received into a state of reconciliation to God by the death of His Son." And this because the reconciliation is a blessing we receive. First, the act of God giving reconciliation "through the death of His Son;" "through the blood of the cross;" then the sending His apostles to win us to accept that restored favour; then our accepting it.—*Dr. Pusey.*

[12958] Reconciliation points to a change of relationship between God and man, brought about by the death of Christ as a sacrifice for our sins. By the atoning work of the God-man Divine justice was satisfied; the Divine anger against our sins was laid aside, and the Divine love was no longer hindered in its full outward expression towards man. God and man are now reconciled. It is incorrect to represent the death of Christ as removing hindrances on man's side only to the enjoyment of the Divine love; it removed hindrances also on the side of God in regard to its free manifestation. God always loved the world, else He never would have sent His Son in order to die for us; but, apart from this, the action of His love would be restrained by sin. In the cross of Christ God has established a new relation with the human family. There is now nothing on God's side

which obstructs His love reaching us. He is reconciled as far as He is concerned; and hence we are bid to be reconciled to Him, to lay down the arms of a rebel, to accept the pardon offered, and all the blessings which are to be found in Christ Jesus our Lord. In 2 Cor. v. 18-20 we have both aspects of the reconciliation represented. As God is reconciled on His side, we are bid to be reconciled on our side, or, in other words, by the aid of the Holy Spirit we are urged to enter into the new and loving relationship which God has established between Himself and mankind by the sacrifice of His Son upon the cross.—*C. N.*

[12959] An expression in the second article of the Church of England requires a few words of comment. It runs thus: "The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men." There it is said that our Lord and Saviour suffered and died to "reconcile the Father to us," and it is but just to acknowledge that the expression itself is not found in Scripture, neither is the language in exact accordance with that of the Word of God on the same subject. It is there stated that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," while here it is asserted that God is reconciled to the world. It is on this account that the expression has been objected to as unscriptural; and I am quite free to confess that it is one which, valuing highly, as I do, exact accordance, in all such cases, with the very words of the Bible, I would prefer not to use. But, while admitting this, I do also mean to assert that the ideas intended to be conveyed by the expression are, in my judgment, fully in accordance with revealed truth. The very words themselves may admit of justification, remembering when they were first used, upwards of three centuries ago; but, as just stated, their teaching I believe to be scripturally true.—*Rev. William MacIlwaine, A.M.*

[12960] All things are reconciled
In Thee, O Lord—all fierce extremes that beat
Along Time's shore, like chidden waves grown mild,
Have crept to kiss Thy feet.

All things are reconciled,
For all grows fair in Thee
Since Thou didst gather them in one, and bring
This faded flower of our humanity
To perfect blossoming.
—*D. Greenwell.*

[12961] All barriers were broken down in Him, the atoning sacrifice, the mediating Lord — all barriers between man and man, between man and God, between earth and heaven. No barriers of race could destroy the unity of the humanity He had deigned to take, not as a mutable vesture, but as another nature; no barriers of past sin could divide the most guilty who believed in Him, from God and from purity; no impenetrable brazen gates of Hades could separate, really, the dead and the living, since the seen and the unseen were alike His kingdom. Where any wall of partition had stood, He stood, and said, "I am the Door." Where the gates of exclusion stood, He stands, with the compassionate countenance to welcome, and the irresistible pierced hands to bless and to unite.—*Schönberg Cotta Series.*

XVII. Substitution in Relation to Sanctification.

1 As regards the influence of moral motives.

[12962] The moral faculties of man render him susceptible of being acted upon by the power of moral motives; and that he should be treated as such in the method of restoring him to purity, accords with what has been ascertained of the conditionality of eternal life. Hence God plies the will of man with various reasons for personal holiness: his fears, hopes, gratitude, and his sense of right and wrong are earnestly appealed to. The hatefulness of sin, the inherent fitness of virtue and piety, their essential loveliness, their immense advantage for time and eternity, and their undeniable claims upon responsible creatures, are set forth in every style of persuasive address. Precept, example, doctrine, exhortation, promise, threatening, command, and invitation, conspire to impress the human mind with such incentives as may induce voluntary abandonment of evil, and cleaving to the good. In some schemes which boast most loudly of moral power this potent motive is altogether absent. That which ignores guilt, and talks of a direct power of Divine love killing sinful principle in the heart, ensures its own impotence by repudiating the wondrous influence to sanctify which operates through the consciousness of a free full pardon. The clear sense of justification is a great gift of grace in itself; and also one of the leading factors in the transmutation by which a hard heart is subdued first into a godly sorrow, and then into loving gratitude. Is the bent towards glad devout thanksgiving an ingredient of a holy state? Let the Psalmist tell by what remembrance it is fostered: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities" (Psa. ciii. 2, 3).—*Marshall Randles.*

2 As regards the agency of the Holy Spirit.

[12963] The curse of the Spirit's absence is partially removed from all men—even those who will not receive Him unto regeneration; this blessing, like justification, being conditional

on human concurrence. To bring fallen men up to the level of a free responsible choice between life and death, the Spirit, obtained by Christ, is sent forth to "strive with men," to "draw" them unto the Son, to "convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment;" and by the Spirit's agency the "true Light" "lighteth every man that cometh into the world." And this partial removal or suspension of the curse during temporal probation is due also to the ground of remission created by the penal substitution of our gracious Lord. The intervening of the Spirit's agency between the offering up of the God-man, and the accomplished holiness of men, does not in the least destroy the causal relation of the blood of Christ to our sanctity. The presence of an intermediate cause does not invalidate the more primary one. The sufferings of Christ, through the action of His Spirit, purifies corrupt hearts as really and truly as if Christ accomplished the same result without any intervention. Sanctification, as sometimes represented, seems to bear no relation to justification, or to the objective atonement beyond that of contiguity or arbitrary verbal association, which ill comports with the language of Scripture. The theory maintained is that justification presents a great motive power to sanctification; and both rest judicially on the firm foundation laid by the vicarious death of Jesus Christ; and thus the different elements of objective and subjective salvation naturally articulate into each other, and the scheme displays in the harmony of its parts, and the completeness of its whole, a wisdom worthy of the infinite God; in its profound homage to law, the grandeur of eternal righteousness; and in the concentration of its forces on the everlasting life of guilty sinners, the fullest, brightest, most winning view ever gained by human mind, of the boundless love of God.—*Ibid.*

XVIII. Use and Abuse of the Term "Satisfaction."

[12964] The word "satisfaction," it is well to note, is not a Scriptural word, but a legal term adopted by later writers to express more precisely than any Scriptural term they could find, the nature of the redemptive act. The use of a definite term to express what must otherwise have been stated in the more general and figurative language of Scripture was necessary to furnish a basis for logical systems. Unfortunately, what this phraseology gained in precision, it lost in truth. Its accuracy of meaning arose from its well-defined use in the transactions of human law. But to transfer the principles which regulated the legal relation of debtor and creditor to the mediation of Christ is a course which has no warrant in Scripture, or rather is irreconcilable with the figures there used. These figures doubtless denote a real analogy, but then they are somewhat vague as to the extent of that analogy. Satisfaction remedied this vagueness, but it did so by applying to the Divine government ideas borrowed from the dealings of men, the applicability of which was altogether a gratuitous assumption. Must we, then, repudiate the word satisfaction, and every statement of the atonement in which it occurs? Far from it. Perhaps few words could be found better calculated to express the results of Christ's sufferings and obedience in removing those objective obstacles and disabilities which were the consequence of man's violation of the Divine law. Christ made not only a "sufficient sacrifice and oblation," but "satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." He cancelled the claims of law upon us; and how can we better express this than by calling it the satisfaction of justice? Even taking the word in its more restricted sense, as the discharge of a debt, since, perhaps, no earthly analogy more truthfully represents sins and sinners than that of debts and debtors; so, perhaps, nothing can better figure our altered relation to God, through what Christ has done for us, than the description of His sacrifice as the satisfaction of man's debt. Such a cautious use of the word as this, or such a use of it as is to be found in our Articles and Liturgy, can no more be objected to than that of any of the extra-Scriptural terms in such common use among theologians. But the use of the word is not so harmless, where it is substituted (as it was by the Schoolmen) for the more Scriptural terms sacrifice and propitiation, in order to supply the means of theorizing about the manner in which Christ's sufferings and obedience had produced the effects ascribed to them.—*Rev. John Cotter Macdonnell, B.D.*

[12965] Propitiation is a Scriptural designation of what Christ has done for us. Satisfaction has been used to express the same thing; but its application being more extensive, there may be ideas implied in it which are not implied in the Scriptural word, and which must, therefore, be separated and set aside before making it the basis of logical reasoning. Propitiation (ἱλασμὸς) implies the reconciliation of God and man before alienated, by means of sacrifice—in the Christian scheme, by the sufferings and obedience of Christ. Of neither the estrangement nor the reconciliation have we any adequate idea, though our consciousness testifies to the reality of both. Satisfaction, as it is frequently used, implies this further idea—that the cause of the estrangement and the reconciliation are alike to be sought in certain external things which can be measured and numbered—that sins and punishments (like debts and money) have not only a fixed relation to one another, but a relation measurable by arithmetic. In short, the Schoolmen, in their evolution of this part of the idea of satisfaction, entirely lost sight of sin as a state of the agent, mysterious in itself, mysterious in its consequences; and considered only sinful acts, as things which could be measured against punishment, and which would combine it (like certain chemical constituents) only in fixed weights and volumes.—*Ibid.*

[12966] The term may not be the most happy one that could have been chosen, and it may have given rise to unwise speculations; but penetrate beneath the surface, and you will find a solid foundation for the idea as applied to the Christian atonement.—*Litton.*

XIX. The Goodness of God in Redemption.

1 As displayed in the infinitude of the mercy involved.

[12967] Mercy with relation to an offender is a disposition to forgive. Mercy in reference to a sufferer is a disposition to relieve. In the case of man and the Divine conduct towards him, these two are inseparably united. Under the government of a holy and benevolent Deity misery uniformly presupposes guilt, and guilt as necessarily infers misery as an inevitable sequence. When the guilty are pardoned, the miserable are made happy. And when the miserable are made happy, it is by the taking away of the sin from which their misery originated. Peculiar force is imparted to the practical evidence of the Divine goodness by the consideration of the character in a moral view of the world in which we witness its displays; it is a world of apostates, of rebels; a world of which He Himself has given the true description when representing Himself as looking down from heaven, and taking a full and continuous survey of its population; a survey for the express purpose of "seeing whether there were any that did understand and that did seek God." He pronounces the verdict: "They are all gone out of the way; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Certainly, we repeat, in such a world the wonder is, not that there is so much suffering, but that there is so much enjoyment; nay, that there is any enjoyment at all, where nothing but misery is deserved. In one view, every act of goodness to such creatures is an act of mercy. To him whose desert is death, it is mercy to be permitted to live. To him who deserves nothing but evil, every good thing he receives is strictly a gift of mercy. To him who is the subject of a righteous sentence of condemnation, every moment's suspension of the execution of that sentence is a moment of mercy. All that man enjoyed in the primeval paradise, when

> "His Maker's image blessed his soul,
> And glory crowned his head,"

was the fruit of the goodness of his benevolent and all-bountiful Creator. All that he has enjoyed since has been the fruit of the mercy of the patient and long-suffering God of salvation. —*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

[12968] In treatises of human philosophy on the goodness of God, we look in vain for the cross. Philosophy in modern days, like philosophy in days of old, is ashamed of it. But in the Bible it holds the first and most prominent place. In the philosophy of the Bible, it is true, there are many and impressive references to the displays of God's goodness in creation and providence. But redemption is its great theme. It is here that we behold Jehovah "delighting in mercy" (Micah vii. 18). It is here that He opens to us His heart and discloses the fulness of love that is there; reveals the "unsearchable riches" (Eph. iii. 18) of His grace. "God is love" is written on all creation. But nowhere is the delightful lesson so conspicuously and strikingly inscribed as on the cross. It is written with "the finger of God" (Exod. xxxi. 18).—*Ibid.*

[12969] The argument in proof of the Divine goodness arising out of the character and deserts of the creatures who are the recipients of His favours, rises incomparably higher, receives a force and conclusiveness such as may fairly be pronounced infinite, when we go forward to the contemplation of the work of redemption. This is ever held forth in Scripture as, beyond all comparison, the most wonderful manifestation of the Divine benevolence, the grand proof of its infinitude. Here there opens before us a boundless field, and one as delightful as it is extensive and various. It is a theme that shall occupy the praises of wondering men and angels for ever and ever! What, in the circumstances, would a malevolent being have done? Nothing remedial, assuredly. He would have allowed the case to remain without a remedy. He would have left the race to perish in the ruin they had brought upon themselves, and have exulted in witnessing it. Here, then, it is that we have the most interesting and overwhelming view of the benevolence of the Godhead. The proof of goodness in the remedy which it has provided is such as infinitely to surpass whatever may appear of the contrary in the fact of the existence of evil. And this of itself should go far to satisfy us that the permission of this fact was not out of harmony with the attribute of goodness, how far soever that step of the Divine procedure may exceed the limits of our faculties fully to comprehend it.—*Ibid.*

[12970] The death of the cross is an apocalypse, an unveiling, an uncovering, of the eternal love of God for men. Men, as we may see from the religions which preceded that of Christ, had come to doubt and distrust, if not to deny, that God loved them. They conceived of Him as an offended and austere Being, who needed to be placated or atoned by gifts and sacrifices before He would be gracious to them. Christ came to convince them that they had misconceived the Father; to teach them that God would *make* the atonement they had supposed Him to demand; to assure them that He had never ceased to love them, and that His love was of a quality which would bear wrong, distrust, enmity, death, and yet not loosen its hold. In short, He unveiled the hidden love of God; He showed how far it would go, how much

it would do and bear, in order that men might be redeemed from the miserable captivity of sin, that they might be reconciled and restored to Him.

I quote no texts; for there is no need. No one who has read the New Testament with any care will fail to recall many passages which speak of the sacrifice of Christ as a manifestation of the love of God, as a proof that He so loved the world, even when it was at enmity against Him, that, to redeem the world, He spared not His only Son, but freely gave Him up for us all. No such reader but will frankly admit that this thought pervades it from end to end, and is affirmed, not by the letter only, but by the spirit of Scripture.—*Samuel Cox, D.D.*

2 As displayed in the magnitude of the blessings bestowed.

(1) *With regard to man's immortality.*

[12971] The blessings of God in redemption regard man as immortal. They pertain to an unending existence that is to be coeval in duration with the Divine; that is to be maintained as long as God shall live to maintain it, of which no powers of computation possessed by man can express the length, or even a portion of it; for that which has no end is hardly divisible into portions. This consideration alone, then, the relation of redemption to man's immortality—the great general object of the scheme to provide for the happiness of the eternity of his being, stamps upon it an importance that is unutterable, a value that is beyond calculation. It brings the operation of the Divine benevolence (if I may so speak) into a sphere of exercise more worthy of the infinite God than the interests of the little span of life to which men are limited while on earth. The Infinitely Wise and Good has not made provision for time and left eternity a blank. Nay, worse, far worse than a blank. For this immortal creature, be it remembered, is a fallen creature. He is guilty, and obnoxious to punishment. He is sinful, morally polluted, sunk from his original high estate of spiritual purity, honour, and blessedness. He is an alien from God, estranged from His favour, the object of His just and holy displeasure.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

[12972] How good, how merciful, how condescending, is the God whom we serve! In His gracious dealings towards us helpless sinners, His own words compare Him to a shepherd full of care for His flock. So anxious for our salvation is He that He would go in search of one poor wanderer who had left the fold, and was left in the wilderness of this wicked world. When one soul is found and restored, there is "joy in heaven!" Though in the estimate of men its value be no more highly prized than a lost sheep in a desert, or a paltry coin on the floor of a widow's cottage—to its real owner, to the Father who created it, to the Son who redeemed it by His blood, to the Spirit of holiness who sanctifieth it, the soul of every one of us is of great price. Its salvation adds to the perfect happiness of the blessed.—*J. E. Tyler.*

(2) *With regard to man's ruined state.*

[12973] They are blessings suited to man in this his state of spiritual ruin and wretchedness: blessings, therefore, of which the value ought to be estimated by contrast with the dreadful nature of the opposite evils. To be in a state of guilt and condemnation, of alienation from God, of moral depravity, and of judicial exposure to eternal misery, is to be in a state, for the degradation, the unhappiness, and the peril of which there are no terms in "the tongues of men or of angels" sufficiently strong. —*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

[12974] The chasm between the sinful creature and the Holy One recognized, guarded; hollowed deeper and deeper through the centuries, by man's sin, by deeper revealings of the Divine holiness; yet always, on the other side of that chasm, infinite pity.

Man choosing to be "as gods," instead of to be like God, and with God; and losing God and the likeness to Him together: choosing to be the centre of the universe, and by that choice becoming a mere atom in the midst of a chaos; falling and dying inwardly with the loss of God. Love changing into selfish passion; aspiration into ambition.

Still, God seeking, speaking; pronouncing the sentence, yet promising, recalling; closing the spoiled Paradise, yet opening a tabernacle in the wilderness, a temple and holy place among the thorns and thistles.

(3) *With regard to the priceless ness of the gift freely offered in view of man's tremendous need.*

[12975] It is not the value of the blessings of salvation themselves, unspeakable though that value is, that constitutes the most affecting display of the love and grace that are in the heart of God. It is not merely that "God hath given to us eternal life," but that "this life is in His Son." It is not "redemption" merely, but "redemption through His blood" that manifests the exuberance of Divine mercy. The Son of God Himself is God's "unspeakable gift;" His chief mercy to a fallen world; a boon of such incalculable vastness of amount, as to throw every other into shade, and to furnish a sure pledge for all else that we can ever possibly need: "He who spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" It were a contradiction to imagine anything else withheld. A gift, in itself Divine, may well ensure to us whatever is created.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

[12976] "God commendeth His love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "The love of God our Saviour toward

man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

It will be remarked that in these passages the sacrifice of Christ is traced up to the love of God, as the source from which it flowed. That sacrifice is as valuable for what it proves as for what it effects. It effects, meritoriously, our redemption. It proves the fatherly heart of God, which yearns over sinners in their lost estate with the utmost tenderness. Is this inconsistent with the former testimony of God's deep-seated antipathy to sin? If it be apparently so, it cannot be really so; for both testimonies are repeatedly and explicitly made in the Scriptures of truth. We are as little children estimating a character of matured wisdom and goodness, and the inconsistencies which appear on the surface in such a character might vanish like a morning cloud, if clearer light were poured into the dim chamber of our minds. But is there here even *an apparent* inconsistency? To plain minds, not entangled in the web of metaphysical subtleties, we humbly think there is none whatever.—*Dean Goulburn.*

[12977] The nature of the relation which has from eternity subsisted between the Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity is to us an entire and impenetrable secret; a secret, every attempt at the explanation of which would be but a presumptuous "darkening of counsel by words without knowledge." I can only say at present that my own conviction has long been, that the designation means the same thing with the name "Emmanuel," "God manifest in the flesh;" that it expresses the constitution of His one person as God-man. And I need go, indeed I can go no higher, for evidence of the love of the Godhead. It is surely enough to know what an inspired Evangelist testifies: "In the beginning was the Word," &c. By dwelling on the paternal relation, in all its endearing closeness, and all the force and tenderness of its affections amongst men; by painting, before the eye of your fancy, the touching scene of the venerable "father of the faithful" offering up "his son, his only son Isaac, whom he loved," laying the wood in order, binding on the altar the beloved of his soul, the one object on whom all the affections of nature and all the hopes of piety centred, and grasping the knife to inflict the deadly stroke—I might succeed in awakening your feelings to sympathizing emotion, although not as in a parent's bosom. But I should be afraid of making an impression at the expense of truth, of causing feeling to mislead judgment. I would shun what might produce any erroneous and unworthy conceptions of the Divine nature. That the Eternal Word made flesh was the object of the Father's infinite love, we know; even of that love which subsists immutably and everlastingly among the Persons of the One Godhead. Further than this I wish not to go.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

3 As displayed in the graciousness of their bestowment.

[12978] Divine benevolence is specially displayed in conferring what is unmerited, unpurchased, unsolicited. If a good has been deserved, or if a price of whatever kind has been paid for it, then it ceases to be a gift. And if, instead of being readily and generously offered, it has been asked, and not asked merely, but extorted by dint of importunate solicitation, the gift itself remains the same, but it excites little admiration of the giver, and little gratitude in the bosom of the receiver. God's "delight in mercy" evinced itself in the early intimation of His merciful designs to the rebel creatures. He did not leave them in long, dreary, and dread suspense, to pine away under the gnawings of the warm remorse, and tremble in apprehension of coming retribution. He came forward immediately, and while He confirmed the righteous sentence of condemnation against the transgressors (a sentence which never could be annulled) He announced the tidings of a Deliverer by whom salvation was to be effected for the transgressor in full consistency with the justice and the truth of the sentence against his rebellion. The "unspeakable gift" of God's love is one which could never, in any way or in any degree, be deserved; for which no price ever could be paid. That, indeed, is saying little. For what is there which a sinful creature could deserve, or for which he could pay any price to his God? We may add, it could never even have been solicited; inasmuch as it never could have entered into the heart of man or of creature to conceive of it. The very admission of the thought (were it imaginable that it ever should have suggested itself except as coming from God) would have been the most daring and unheard-of presumption. It was the result entirely of God's eternal, self-moving love. No mistake can be greater, or more directly in the face of Scripture, than that which fancies the love of God procured for sinners by the mediation of Christ. The very reverse was the truth. The atonement sprung from the love, not the love from the atonement. And as for the blessings of salvation, which are all conferred on the ground of the righteousness and atonement of Him who is Himself the great gift of Divine love, they are all freely offered and freely bestowed. The language of the entire Bible on this point is in harmony with that of Isaiah: "Ho, every one that thirsteth," &c.—*Ibid.*

[12979] By revelation we see how God's justice and mercy, His holiness and truth, are each distinct attributes of the Godhead; by redemption we behold and wonder at their gracious union.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[12980] It is a peculiarity in regard to these blessings (Isa. lv. 1), that they not only are offered to all who come for them, although they bring no price, but no price must be brought. The very imagination in the mind of any sinner

that he has a price to bring, be it in kind or in amount what it may, will effectually forfeit the blessings. Among men, good things are sometimes dispensed gratuitously to those who have not wherewith to purchase, while a price is taken from such as can afford it. We sell to the rich ; we give to the poor. But in the case before us all are poor, all alike poor. No one has anything to give to God in the way of purchase-money for His blessings.—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

4 As displayed in the independence of the Giver.

[12981] Disinterestedness is an item which invariably enters into our estimate of goodness, into our calculation of its amount in every beneficent act. The deed of generosity may be noble and admirable in appearance, accompanied with every circumstance that could be conceived to concur in recommending an action to approbation and applause. . . . But if in course of time we come to discover that under all this semblance . . . there was cloaked a selfish purpose, that instant the charm is broken. . . . It may surely be assumed as a first truth, a maxim of self-evident and incontrovertible truth, that all the doings of the infinite God to the creatures of His hands must be perfectly disinterested. Of all His creatures He is entirely and for ever independent ; of their character, their condition, their very existence. The principle, while applicable to creation, may, in its full force, be applied also to redemption. The infinite blessedness of Deity was possessed before creation. Creation was not necessary to its enjoyment. It would continue in all its infinitude were all creation blotted out of existence. And so the blessedness of the Godhead was the same after man had sinned as before ; would have continued the same had the whole race perished, and would still remain infinite were heaven to be unpeopled and its blessed inhabitants to become guilty sufferers, that is, were it possible that all this should take place in consistency with His all-gracious engagements. For by all this we do not mean to convey the impression that the Divine happiness is independent of the success of the Divine plans, the accomplishment of the Divine ends, the maintenance and manifestation of the Divine character. No ; such suppositions are not for a moment to be made. All that we mean is, that the blessedness of Deity is infinite, and independent of all that is created. If it be not as we have been stating, then there must have been a time when the essential blessedness of Deity was less perfect than it had been before ; when it was susceptible of augmentation; when, therefore, it was not infinite. The language of Scripture strongly and pointedly conveys the idea (and it accords with every conception we can form of what is honourable to the Infinite One) of His entire independence of the influence, for benefit or for injury, of all His creatures ; for what is true of man must be equally true of all the rest. "Can a man be profitable unto God?" &c. "Look unto the heavens, and see, and behold the clouds which are higher than thou. If thou sinnest, what doest thou against Him?" &c. Even the terms of the Psalmist, when understood as having prophetic reference to Christ, and as, in prophecy, actually spoken by Him : "My goodness extendeth not to thee," might, in this view, be regarded as strictly true. The entire mediatorial work of the Redeemer, with all its glorious and everlasting results, cannot in strict propriety be regarded as having added to the necessarily infinite felicity and absolutely boundless self-sufficiency of the Godhead.—*Ibid.*

[12982] The God of salvation has been entirely disinterested (I feel as if it were almost irreverent to use the term, involving, as it does, or seems to do, a supposition so remote from possibility, and so pregnant with impiety) in all that He has done for the fallen race of men. The benefit has been solely theirs. It is true, His own glory is promoted. Nay, it is true, that, this being the very highest of possible ends, it must have been, not only in His view, but first in His view, seeing the Infinitely Wise must necessarily act in harmony with the truth of things in regard to their relative magnitude, their respective measures of importance. But we are not to suppose it necessary to the Divine happiness that His glory should be displayed, or that there should exist a single creature to contemplate it.—*Ibid.*

5 As displayed in full view of total unworthiness on the part of the recipients.

[12983] Men have at times expressed themselves unguardedly and unadvisedly ; as if, from the character of God, it was a thing to be expected that He should come forward in the way of interposition for the deliverance of man. Not, indeed, on the ground of claim or right founded in justice. But still there is a feeling as if it was a thing to be looked for, all the circumstances considered. I shall only say that this is, for such a creature to take, delicate and dangerous ground. Assuredly such a sentiment and such language come with no good grace from the sinning creature himself. Could we suppose such a state of things as misery without guilt ; could we fancy an intelligent creature to have become wretched, not by misconduct, but simply by misfortune—we might then see some ground on which to indulge such an anticipation. But this is not the position of man ; nor can it ever be the position of any creature under the righteous and benignant administration of Heaven. And surely it augurs not a very becoming state of mind, when the sinner who has incurred the desert of punishment begins to talk of grounds on which there was reason to expect that the God whom he had offended would in some way interpose to save him. That would not be the self-condemning humble-mindedness which should characterize a guilty rebel against rightfully supreme autho-

rity and the claims of infinite love. A proper sense of sin and guilt should lay the transgressor low, should stifle every breathing of hope, should fill his mouth with the language of self-abhorrence ; so that, instead of saying in his heart that from such a God there was nothing to apprehend ; that the sentence He had pronounced, just as it was He would surely never find it in His heart to execute, but would provide some way in which it might be cancelled, and mercy shown to the sinner ; He should fully justify God in his condemnation, feel and acknowledge that God and His throne would be guiltless, that neither he nor any one of the guilty race would have any ground of complaint, that no claim on the part of any of them would be violated, nor any obligation on the part of God left unfulfilled, that nothing would have been done at variance with any one of the Divine perfections, but that all of them would have retained their full glory, had the threatening against sin been carried out in its full extent as to the parties embraced in it, and without one jot of abatement of its unutterable fearfulness. A deep and settled conviction of the entire unworthiness of the sinner, of there being nothing whatever in his case to warrant the expectation of any Divine interference in his behalf, is essentially necessary to our having right conceptions and impressions of the benevolence of God in the interposition which has actually taken place.—*Ibid.*

[12984] No creature whatever, even the highest and most perfect, can ever possess any natural or rightful claim upon its Creator, any plea of strict and proper merit, or desert, in His presence. The angels of light would all, with one voice, in the deepest prostration of spirit, join in the acknowledgment : "We are unprofitable servants." "Who hath first given to Him?" inquires the apostle. Let the claim be made good, "And it shall be recompensed unto him again." Every claim of the creature on the God that made him must arise from some spontaneous promise, some free and self-imposed obligation on the part of the sovereign. Such was the case with man originally. The threatening of death to transgression implied a promise of life to continued obedience. And the promise became the valid ground of claim or title. Man, retaining his loyal subjection, could plead with confidence the Divine engagement or covenant. But all this was brought to an end by sin. All claim upon God's favour, all right to good, all title, on any ground whatever, to blessing, was then utterly forfeited. The promise was annulled, man's hold on it was for ever lost, when he, to whom it was made, rendered himself, by transgression, obnoxious to the threatening.—*Ibid.*

[12985] We have seen the goodness of God overcoming obstacles that lay in the way of its exercise, in the administration of His ordinary providence; obstacles arising from the rebellion and unworthiness of its objects. But when we view it as bestowing on such undeserving objects blessings infinitely more precious ; when we see Him fixing the compassions of His heart on enemies—on those who had thrown off their allegiance, and who deserved to sink under the weight of His displeasure, and sending His Son to seek and to save them, to bring them back to Himself, from curse to blessing, from wrath to favour, from sin to holiness, from misery to happiness, from hell to heaven—oh, this is compassion worthy of a God ! the compassion of the Infinite !—*Ibid.*

XX. The Justice of God in Redemption.

1 In the scheme itself of substitution and atonement.

[12986] We are accustomed to view the gospel as a revelation of God's mercy. And correctly and scripturally do we so view it. But the strict and proper design of the mediatorial work of Jesus was rather to display the Divine righteousness ; that is, so to display it as to secure its claims and its honour in the extension of mercy to the guilty. Still the extension of mercy is the ultimate end. And it is in order to the gratification of the Divine delight in mercy that the manifestation of His love to righteousness is introduced. The law is just in its requirements and in its sanctions. It cannot undergo alteration. None of its great principles can admit of mitigation, or reduction, or accommodation to the depravity and imperfection of the sinning creature. If the requirements and penalty of the law were originally righteous, they must continue so. To suppose change is to suppose change from right to wrong, a supposition which cannot be made without an impious reflection on the wisdom and rectitude of the Lawgiver. The law must be maintained inviolate. If it be just, then must there be an infraction of justice in not maintaining it.—*Ibid.*

[12987] It is of great importance that we entertain correct conceptions of what is really meant by Divine justice being satisfied. It is to be feared that there are many in whose minds there is associated with the expression, according to a sense in which the word satisfaction is often used, some idea of pleasure or gratification ; as if justice not only demanded punishment, but had a kind of delight in the infliction of it, which it would be a violation of its legitimate rights to withhold. But we must beware of allowing ourselves to be misled by the mere illusion of a figure. Justice is not a person. It is an attribute of character. And when it is personified, it becomes identical with the being of whose character it forms a part ; so that if we speak of justice as having such a pleasure, we speak of Deity as having that pleasure. But this is contrary to His own most explicit assurances. When we speak of satisfaction being rendered to a principle, we can only mean that that principle must in no

respect and in no degree be compromised, but be maintained in the full perfection of its exercise and its glory. Any compromise of such a principle involves a compromise of the character of the Being in whom it resides and operates, and in whose administration it is exercised.—*Ibid.*

[12988] There are certain objections which have been urged against the doctrine of atonement, on the very ground of Divine justice. It has been represented as inconsistent with justice. These objections, it may be observed, proceed very much on false conceptions or false representations of the doctrine. The doctrine, for instance, has been represented as if it proceeded on the principle of the rigid exaction of an equivalent, precisely commensurate to the punishment remitted; by which representation Divine justice has been made to appear under the aspect of a kind of hard, selfish, inexorable vindictiveness, which must have its gratification in the sufferings either of the sinner or his substitute, and in remitting the punishment to the former, merely because it has been endured by the latter. But this is a mean, contracted, degrading, false view of the great Gospel truth. While it was necessary that such a manifestation of God's regard to righteousness should be made as might secure His government from every possible charge, and even from every appearance, of compromising or relinquishing its all-important claims in extending pardon to the guilty; the idea of the atonement being constructed upon the principle of exact equivalent for the amount of punishment remitted, so that justice stands by, while it is made, and sees to it that not one pang less shall be endured in body or in mind, that not one drop less of blood shall be drawn, nor one stripe less inflicted, than what corresponds to the desert of the precise number to be pardoned, is a view utterly derogatory to the infinite dignity of the substitute, and to the consequent infinite value of his sacrifice, as well as to the high character of the Divine justice.—*Ibid.*

[12989] His infinite and unchanging regard to the great principles of His holy and equitable administration is attested and published in such a manner, that as the "justifier of him who believeth in Jesus," His righteousness is as conspicuous as His mercy; and, in the mind of the pardoned sinner, the impression of the claims of the one as deep as that of his obligations to the other. It is thus that the moral government of Jehovah is maintained in all its grandeur, and in all its authority, as the government of the "righteous Lord who loveth righteousness," while mercy bestows, with free and rich munificence, the blessings of forgiveness and of life. The atonement appears as a glorious manifestation of righteousness in all its great essential principles, in order to the honourable and unrestrained exercise of mercy. This end is effected by voluntary substitution; by the atonement of a sufficiently dignified Mediator. Here lies the wisdom of God. So far as we know, or are at all competent to form a judgment, it does not appear how the end could have been accomplished otherwise.—*Ibid.*

[12990] What is the fact brought before us in the atonement? It is that of an innocent person suffering; suffering both in body and in mind, in a degree unprecedented and inconceivable. Such is the fact, the strange anomalous fact. The adversaries of atonement tell us it is unjust that the innocent should suffer for the guilty. But they forget to tell us how it is consistent with justice that the innocent should suffer at all. How, on other principles, can they account for this phenomenon under the government of a holy and just God? In the terms of their objection they assume the innocence of the sufferer. Do they, notwithstanding, while making this assumption hypothetically, themselves believe that the sufferings were personally deserved? They have not dared to say this. They have been driven, by the desperate position of their system, to hint suspicions, to throw out surmises, as if His perfect innocence could hardly be established by sufficient data; but they have never gone so far in their presumption as to attempt actually "convicting Him of sin." It would be presumptuous and vain, indeed, in opposition to such explicit declarations. Well, then, I repeat, look at the fact. Here is an innocent person suffering fearfully. The question is, Why does He suffer? Not on His own account: the supposition of His innocence forbids it; for all suffering arises from sin. Why, then, does He suffer? If the objector shall reply, To confirm the truth of His testimony, and to exhibit to us a pattern of patience and the other suffering virtues, he evidently forgets himself. For this would still be suffering for us, for our good. So that he has his own objection to answer, and to answer in circumstances which impart to it a greater force than those against which he brought it. If it be just in God to admit of the innocent suffering for these ends, can it be unjust in Him to admit of the innocent suffering for other ends? If for their ends, why not for ours? If for an inferior end, why not for one manifestly and incalculably superior?—*Ibid.*

2 **In the communication and extent of the salvation of the gospel.**

[12991] In point of fact, in the providence of God, the tidings of the gospel are sent to some and are not sent to others. I do not now enter into any consideration of the blame imputable to the Church of God, individually or collectively, on the ground of not having duly attended to, and implemented the obligation to provide for the extension of the knowledge of "the only true God and of Jesus Christ whom He hath sent," among men of "every kindred and people and nation and tongue." I am convinced the load of guilt in this respect has been very heavy indeed. But this is not the present inquiry. Let us regard the matter simply as a fact in

Providence. It is a fact. And perhaps next to the fact of the entrance of sin into the universe stands, in point of mysteriousness, the fact that after the lapse of eighteen centuries so very large a portion of our world should be yet in darkness, Christianity in its discoveries of God and His salvation altogether unknown. Our present question is, not how is this mystery to be explained? how is this strange fact to be accounted for? but simply, Is there unrighteousness with God? Is there anything in the fact on which the justice of the Supreme Ruler can be fairly impeached? Now, the answer to this question must be found in the answer to another —namely, can any claim be established, in behalf of any portion of the human race, to the possession of the blessing? It must be obvious, that if there be no claim in equity to the blessing there cannot by possibility be any violation of equity in withholding it. Where no claim exists to be violated there can be no violation of it. And where claim is not violated injustice is not done, equity on the one part bearing exact correspondence to claim on the other.—*Ibid.*

[12992] The distinction is a most important one between the provinces of equity and sovereignty. Sovereignty has reference to the bestowment of good, none at all to the infliction of evil. The latter comes exclusively under the province of equity, and must be regulated solely by its awards. The sovereign infliction of evil is a moral contradiction in terms. It can never, in any degree, have place under the government of a just and a good God. Under such a government it may be laid down as a maxim, from which there is and can be no departure, that no intelligent agent can suffer but for evil desert—that is, but for sin, which is defined to be "transgression of law." But while "the righteous Lord who loveth righteousness" can never punish or inflict suffering in sovereignty—oh, who will question the sovereign right of the Most High, the Proprietor and Ruler of the universe, to bestow His favours as He will? The principles of equity would be infringed by inflicting punishment where punishment is not deserved, where guilt has not been contracted. But surely these principles undergo no violation by the conferring of good where good has not been deserved.—*Ibid.*

[12993] If we only keep in mind the principle of the Divine government as that which His own word assures us will be applied in the administration of judgment — namely, that all will be judged according to their peculiar circumstances, their means of knowledge, their variety and amount of motives, their measure and diversity of privilege of every kind; and at the same time that, in withholding of the knowledge of the discoveries of Revelation, no right is violated, we see all clear. The justice of God stands unimpeachable. It will never be required according to what men have not, unless, indeed, in those cases in which the non-possession arises from their own fault, from their own wilful neglect of what they might have obtained.—*Ibid.*

3 In the punishment of those who disbelieve its testimony and reject its provisions.

[12994] The justice of God in punishing unbelief rests upon the truth of the position here taken up: "This is the condemnation," &c. The obvious general principles in these words is, that in every case the unbelief of the gospel has its source in moral causes, and that these causes are evil. I cannot hesitate to say that if a case could be substantiated at the bar of God, in which the rejection of the gospel arose from principles morally good, from a real regard to the glory of God, and a real humble concern for the interests of holiness, and in which the inward power of these principles was made apparent in a life of true godliness, heartfelt practical godliness, that case, as it comes not within the description of our Lord, could not bring under condemnation. If a case could by possibility occur, in which unbelief was produced by causes morally good; if there could be such a thing as, instead of an "evil heart of unbelief," a good heart of unbelief; instead of the gospel being hated, because the deeds are evil, its being hated because the deeds were good—there could be no condemnation, or the condemnation would not be just. There are three things necessary to the guilt of unbelief, and consequently to the justice of its condemnation: sufficient means of knowledge, sufficient evidence of truth, and sufficient capacity of understanding. If, in any case, any one of these were wanting, the justice of the condemnation would be more than questionable; it could not be established. But the affirmation of Christ is without qualification or exception. The "deeds being evil" is a phrase comprehensive of more than outward and flagrant wickedness.—*Ibid.*

[12995] If there be not sin in the indisposition of heart, by which Divine truth is excluded from the wilfully deluded and blinded mind, then is there no such thing as sin, and no such thing as desert of punishment in the universe. If sinners will impeach Divine justice on such a ground, they only furnish additional evidence of the power of evil principles in blinding the mind. What would they have? They have clear statements of truth, accompanied with all the marks of divinity. They have earnest invitations, with all the marks of sincerity. They have the natural capacity of understanding, considering, believing. They have the most powerful motives set before them to induce their compliance with Divine entreaties, their acceptance of Divine truths. And there is nothing whatever between them and the possession of all that is set before them but want of will, aversion of heart. If this be not sufficient ground to constitute responsibility and guilt, there can be no such thing as responsibility and guilt at all. And then, moreover, the sovereign purpose of God in the salvation of some has no sort of connec-

tion whatever with the principles and motives by which others are kept from receiving and obeying the truth. They are not surely the less guilty in their wilful rebellion, their impenitent and determined worldliness, their inveterate and unsubdued pride of heart. They continue to follow the full bent of their own corrupt and earthly inclinations. They continue to manifest the influence of the "carnal mind," which is "enmity against God." They may talk about Divine purposes; but their consciences belie their lips, and tell them, secretly but unfalteringly, that these purposes are in no respect chargeable with their love of sin and of the world; that they do not love sin because of any such secret purposes, but that they are rather glad of the doctrine of such purposes, because it furnishes them with what they can construe into a plausible pretext under which they may shelter and flatter themselves while persevering in careless neglect and wilful rebellion.—*Ibid.*

[12996] There is nothing in the statements of the gospel which the natural understandings of men are incompetent to comprehend. The meaning of its truths is clear and simple. They are easy to be understood. The question is, Whence comes it that men do not discern their Divine excellence, and receive them as true and as from God? And here we affirm that the sole cause is the want of a right disposition of heart; that this is the inability, the only inability, that exists; that it consists entirely in moral aversion, in want of will to that which is right and good. When men say they cannot, they only use a word in a false sense to screen their consciences from guilt. The word, properly interpreted, means nothing else, less nor more, but that they will not. They cannot renounce the world, they cannot forsake their sins, they cannot consent to the mortification of their pride. These are the causes why they cannot believe the gospel. There is no part of the word of God in which He is represented as condemning sinners because they could not: no verily. But many a time on the ground: "Ye would not." Of this the Bible is full. But of the other, point me out an instance, and I will admit my argument for the Divine justice lost. Can anything be plainer? And can anything be more in harmony with the principles of perfect equity? If the cause of unbelieving rejection of the gospel lies invariably, as we are fully satisfied it does, in some form or other of the moral pravity of the heart, then "is there unrighteousness with God" in visiting it as a sin, seeing it is the result and manifestation of the latent and deep-seated ungodliness of the heart?—*Ibid.*

XXI. Homiletical Applications.

[12997] We owe more to God for redeeming us than for making us; His Word made us; but when He came to redeem us, that Word must be made flesh, and that flesh must suffer. In our creation He gave us ourselves, but in our redemption He gave us Himself; and, by giving Himself for us, gave us ourselves again, that were lost; so that we are ourselves, and all that we have, twice-told; and now, what shall we give unto thee, O thou Preserver of men, for ourselves thus given and redeemed? If we could give ourselves a thousand times over, yet what are we to God? And yet, if we do give ourselves to Him and His service, such as we are, and such as we can, He accepts it, and will reward it. I will never grudge God His own. I have nothing that is not His; and if I give it to Him, He will restore it again with interest; never any man was a loser by God. — *Bp. Henshaw.*

[12998] This will I muse on and weigh with myself, that I may duly know, both in me and in all other things, the atrocity and bitterness of sin which dwelleth in me, and so may the more heartily give over myself wholly to the Lord Christ my Saviour, that He may, with what cross soever shall please Him, slay sin in me, and bring me after His own will and way to newness of life. Wherefore, that I for my part may faithfully, and with all my whole heart, do my diligence in mortifying the desires of my flesh, and in labouring to obey the desires of the Spirit to live a life acceptable to Him, I beseech Him of His grace. —*J. Bradford.*

[12999] Has Christianity redeemed thee from all that is mean, selfish, unhonourable, and ungodly? If not, its end, so far as thou art concerned, is as yet unrealized.

[13000] Each form of misery that passes before us in our path through life is a call to remember that amazing scene of tender self-humiliation, a call to pause and consider how best to apply the healing of His grace, who now is working out the purposes of redeeming love through the ministrations of His servants, to all of whom He hath said, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you."—*Rev. Canon Carter.*

[13001] Man needs redemption from error, release from sin, support under sorrow, and deliverance from death.—*Bp. Hobart.*

[13002] Think of what God has done for us: "God so loved us, that He gave His only-begotten Son to die for us: and if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. God, sending His own Son into the world, condemned sin in the flesh." So, indeed, it should be, that so great a proof of His love should call forth an answering love in us, strong enough to overcome all temptations to sin. But we ought so to love God, and one another, but yet we do not. We do not, because our faith is weak; because the image of God's love in Christ is but faintly impressed on our minds; because we do not see by faith "Him who is invisible." Is not here, then, a reason why we should be careful in the exercise of prayer, and of reading the Scriptures?—why we should use these only means in our power to keep up in our minds the reality,

the lively consciousness of the reality, of Christ's death and resurrection? Is not this a reason for our reading the Scripture over and over again, even when our intellect can almost tell beforehand every word that is coming? So it is with respect to our own recollection of any beautiful scene; the knowledge of any minute particulars connected with it; the height of the cliffs, their nature, the distance from one point to another, the way to get the best view of it—these may still dwell in our memory, and no second visit is needed to restore them. But the impression of the whole scene upon us—nay, what the whole scene was—we cannot vividly recall; we are glad even of a picture, however inadequate, to revive in us something of the same delight as when we looked on the reality. And so, but much more, is it with the moral impression of Christ's death: as a fact in its historical particulars, we may remember it for years without ever opening the Bible; whenever we were asked about it, the recollection might be fresh and ready. But what is become the while of our constant consciousness of its reality? Where is the distinctness of our image of those few days—those days in which is concentred more than the interest of millions of years—those days from Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem to His last recorded words to His disciples before He ascended into heaven? Where is our sense of all the deep truths here contained, concerning sin, and acquittal, and judgment? concerning eternal life or eternal death? Never, indeed, will these truths be present to us enough; but surely every remembrance of them that we can gain, we ought to gain; by reading, by prayer, by that outward and visible act, so mercifully commanded, by which we "show forth continually the Lord's death till He come."

[13003] The best of men is unworthy to loose the latchet of Christ's shoes, yet the sinful woman might do as she would with His sacred feet. Desert may not touch His shoe-tie; love may kiss His feet.—*G. MacDonald, LL.D.*

[13004] Thou didst nothing toward thy own creation, for thou wert created for thy Creator's glory; thou must do something toward thy own redemption, for thou wert redeemed for thy own good; He that made thee without thee, will not save thee without thee.—*F. Quarles.*

[13005] As the light of the sun diffused in the air burns nothing, but the beams contracted in a glass kindle proper matter, so the considering of the common salvation will not be so affecting, nor so warm and soften the heart, as the serious applicative thoughts of it to ourselves. It is not the love of God which is common to all, and diffused like the sunbeams over the whole family of man, but the love of God, concentrated and burning on the cross of Christ for me a sinner, which fires and melts my heart—'tis this—"He loved me, and gave Himself for me."—*Spencer*, 1658.

[13006] The Lord Jesus Christ is not only our Redeemer but our redemption (1 Cor. i. 30). Nothing short of His complete and finished work could have brought back harmony and peace between God and man, and furnished an adequate motive to holy and happy service. The person of each believer is very dear to God. May it not be said, It cost as much love and grace to redeem one single believer as to save the whole elect Church? Each believer needs the whole work of Christ for himself. . . . What consecrated lives ought God's redeemed people to live, since their whole nature is redeemed! How carefully ought they to guard each member of the body, and each faculty of the soul, and how should they abound in praise and good works! (Titus ii. 14; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; 1 Pet. ii. 9).—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13007] The idea of redemption contains also that of claim to the service of the redeemed on the part of their Redeemer. "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. vi. 18). "He that is called, being free, is the servant of Christ. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men" (1 Cor. vii. 22). The Redeemer has not only redeemed us to freedom by His ransom, but has also bought us for His own service, that bondage which is perfect freedom.—*Commentaire de M. Dupuy.*

[13008] Grasp the revelation of Divine love in its fulness. Apply it to yourselves in your daily life; and as you become more and more conscious of the full provision which Love has made in yonder broken body, in yonder outpoured life, you will be able to say, "I find here all that I need to separate me from all that God hates; and if I die with Him, I shall also live with Him; if I suffer I shall also reign."—*Rev. H. M. H. Aitken, M.A.*

PART IV.

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION C.

THE SPECIAL ACTS AND DECREES OF GOD THE FATHER IN REDEMPTION.

[1] Election, or Predestination.

SYLLABUS.

		PAGE
I.	Meaning and Significance of the Term	435
II.	The Three Chief Views on Election	435
III.	General Statement of the Doctrine	435
IV.	The Doctrine stated according to the Scriptural Interpretations of the Early Church and Patristic Theology	437
V.	Teaching of St. Paul upon the Doctrine, and its Application by the Church of England	439
VI.	Points of Difference between the Apostolic Doctrine and that taught by Calvinism	441
VII.	Points of Difference between St. Augustine's Doctrine and that taught by Calvinism	441
VIII.	Statement by the Westminster Confession of Faith on the Doctrine of Election	442
IX.	Answers to Objections urged against the Doctrine	442
X.	The Mystery of Election	443
XI.	The Evidences of its Truth	444
XII.	Its Relations	445
XIII.	Its Practical Applications	445

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION C.

THE SPECIAL ACTS AND DECREES OF GOD THE FATHER IN REDEMPTION.

1

ELECTION, or PREDESTINATION.

I. Meaning and Significance of the Term.

[13009] Election is an act of choice. This word has different applications in the Scriptures. (1) It signifies God's taking a whole nation, community, or body of men, into external covenant with Himself, by giving them the advantage of revelation as the rule of their belief or practice, when other nations are without it (Deut. vii. 6). (2) A temporary designation of some person or persons to the filling up of some particular station in the visible church, or office in civil life (John vi. 70; 1 Sam. x. 24). (3) The gracious act of the Divine Spirit, whereby God actually and visibly separates His people from the world by effectual calling (John xv. 19). (4) That eternal, gratuitous, sovereign, and immutable purpose of God, whereby He selected from among all mankind, and of every nation under heaven, all those whom He effectually calls to be sanctified and everlastingly saved by Christ (Eph. i. 4; 2 Thess. ii. 13).—*Buck's Theological Dictionary.*

[13010] We are not left without an analogy in God's providential arrangements to assist us in understanding the compatibility of the power of choice being divided between two parties. In a man's selecting a woman for his partner in life, the initiative is wholly on the man's side, who can say, "Thou hast not chosen me, but I have chosen thee" (John xv. 16). Yet this does not preclude the choice of the woman, who still has it in her power to accept or refuse the offer made to her. The election, however absolute on man's side, is still mutual (Sol. Song i. 4). Thus God's election and man's may be mutually compatible. The one choice does not exclude the other.—*Principal Forbes.*

II. The Three Chief Views on Election.

[13011]

No.	Three chief views.	Its object.	Its moving cause.	Its character.
1.	Calvinism.	Final Salvation and glory.	God's absolute, irrespective decree.	Arbitrary.
2.	Arminianism.	Final Salvation and glory.	Foreseen persevering faith.	Not Arbitrary.
3.	Ecclesiastical Election.	Christian and Church privileges.	God's absolute, irrespective decree.	Arbitrary.

—*C. N.*

III. General Statement of the Doctrine.

1 Its assertions.

[13012] As presented in Scripture, election has respect to persons, as contradistinguished from election of nations or communities, and also from election merely of character, *e.g.*, of such as shall believe and obey (Luke x. 20; Phil. iv. 3; John vi. 37–40). According to these passages the elect are a definite number of persons, said to be given to the Son by the Father, and to have their very names recorded in heaven. This election to eternal life is an election of persons out of a race universally guilty and condemned, none of whom have therefore any claim whatever on the Divine favour (Rom. iii. 19), whence, fairly considered, it is not liable to any charge of injustice on the part of God. Further, this decree of election, like all the Divine decrees, is eternal and immutable. In point of fact, God *does* save a certain number of this human family; and it is

against all right views of God to suppose that He should have acted without a plan or purpose so to do; and as little can we suppose that having once formed such a plan He should ever change it. Hence believers are said in Scripture to be "chosen before the foundation of the world," and their salvation is "according to His own purpose and grace which was given in Christ Jesus before the world began" (Eph. i. 4; 2 Tim. i. 2). Their election has its source in free grace and love. It is "according to the good pleasure of His will," and not for anything good in the creature whatever (Eph. i. 5; Rom. ix. 11, 18, xi. 5). It includes all the means and constituent parts of salvation, as well as salvation itself in the sense of the ultimate and crowning gift of eternal life. We are not "chosen to salvation" without faith and holiness, but "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. ii. 13; Eph. i. 4). Moreover election does not proceed on the redemption of Christ as the ground or cause of it, but includes that redemption as the grand means through which the purpose to save is accomplished. Hence we are said to be "chosen in Him." Such we believe to be the election of Scripture, and by the mere statement of it, most if not all the false theories on the subject, as well as the more common and imposing objections, are at once met and refuted. —*Rev. Robert Frew, D.D.*

[13013] 1. Its source is: (1) Not in the creature. Eph. i. 5, ix. 11–18, xi. 5; cf. Luke x. 20; Phil. iv. 3; John vi. 37 (not on account of foreseen faith and perseverance). (2) But in the Creator. Eph. i. 4; 2 Tim. i. 9. (Redemptive work its *result*, not *cause*.)

2. Its nature is: (1) Not national, (2) Not ecclesiastical, (3) But personal. Matt. xx. 23, xxiv. 22–24; John xvii. 24; Acts xiii. 48; chap. viii. 28–30, ix. 23, xi.; Eph. i. 4, 5; 1 Thess. i. 4, v. 9; 2 Tim. i. 9; 1 Pet. i. 2; 2 Pet. i. 10.

3. Its range comprises: (1) Faith (2 Thess. ii. 13); (2) Holiness (Eph. i. 4); (3) Eternal life.—*C. N.*

[13014] Election must be traced either to God or to man; it cannot be the combined result of two essentially distinct and opposite agencies. Grace and works are mutually exclusive. A tax cannot be both voluntary and compulsory; it must be one or the other. A piece of land cannot be both part of an island and of the mainland; it must be one or the other. And so if words have any meaning attachable to them, if ideas are realities, election cannot be both by grace and by works; it must be by one or the other. No combination or mixture of the two is conceivable in the very nature of things (Rom. xi. 6).—*Ibid.*

[13015] The doctrine of election may be understood in two ways; either as the choosing out of mankind some individuals or communities for the enjoyment of peculiar advantages temporal or spiritual in this world, or the selecting some individuals as partakers of eternal happiness in the next.—*Archdeacon Jones.*

2 Its negations.

(1) *It is no part of the doctrine of election that God created a part of mankind merely to damn them.*

[13016] It is indeed revealed that God *will* punish multitudes of the human race "with everlasting destruction from His presence," but He did not bring them into being merely *for the sake* of punishing them. God is love. There is not one malevolent emotion rankling in His bosom. It was one of the foulest stains that was ever cast upon His spotless character, to admit the thought that He brought creatures into being merely for the purpose of making them for ever miserable. In Himself He desires the salvation of every living man. We have His oath, "that He has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." If He destroys the wicked, it is because their perdition is inseparable from the preservation of His own glory, and the highest good of His kingdom, and not because it is in itself well pleasing to His benevolent mind, or the ultimate object of their creation.—*Buck's Theological Dictionary.*

[13017] Election does not include or imply foreordination to evil, as this would (1) Make God the author of sin; (2) Remove the guilt of the sinner, annihilate personal responsibility; (3) Contradict the plain statements of the Scriptures: (*a*) About Christ's death being for all (John iii. 16); (*b*) Respecting God's invitations to sinners (Ezek. xxxiii. 11; 1 Tim. ii. 4; Titus ii. 11; 2 Pet. iii. 9).—*C. N.*

(2) *It is no part of the doctrine of election that Christ died exclusively for the elect.*

[13018] Such a representation is an unjustifiable perversion of the doctrine, and exposes it to unnecessary objections. Though there would have been no atonement but for God's design to save the elect, and though there could have been no designs of mercy toward the elect without an atonement, yet the doctrine of atonement and election are two distinct things. Much idle breath and illiberal crimination might have been spared by giving them that place in the Christian sytem which they hold in the Word of God.—*Buck's Theological Dictionary.*

(3) *It is no part of the doctrine of election that the elect will be saved let them do what they will.*

[13019] The immutable law of the Divine kingdom has made personal holiness essential to eternal life. It is not less certain that "no man will see the Lord without holiness," than that no man will see the Lord unless he be of the "election of grace." The elect cannot be saved unless they possess supreme love to God, sincere contrition for all their sins, and faith unfeigned in the Lord Jesus Christ. The elect can no more enter heaven without being prepared for it than others. If a man continues

stupid and secure—if he never reads the Scripture—if he never attends upon the Word of God and ordinances of the Church, if he is never anxious for the salvation of his soul, if he never repents and believes the gospel, if he never becomes a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, he may rest assured there is nothing in the doctrine of election that will save him. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."—*Ibid.*

(4) *It is no part of the doctrine of election that the non-elect will not be saved if they do as well as they can.*

[13020] If sinners "repent and believe the gospel," there is nothing in the doctrine of election that will destroy them. If they become reconciled to God, He will regard them with favour. If they "come to Christ" they shall "in no wise be cast out." Not one will be lost unless he persists in impenitence, rejects the offers of mercy, and dies in his sins.—*Ibid.*

3 Its analogical considerations.

[13021] Analogy, even when it does not convince, is well fitted to silence, and prompt to more careful inquiry. In many cases it will pave the way for a more ready reception of, and more devout acquiescence in, what was erroneously supposed to be a severe and repulsive dogma. Now the principle involved in the doctrine of election . . . and its attendant difficulties are not confined to the region of Scripture or revelation, but meet us everywhere, so that if any will war against this point of Scripture doctrine he must carry that war into other regions also; yea, wage it in every province of the Divine administration. In God's ordinary providence how diversely does He deal with men, and in how many ways does His preconceived purpose and plan affect their history in *this* life! They are far from being placed by God on a footing of equality in this world. . . . It is manifestly God that makes to differ, and the true source of the difference is to be found in His scheme of providential government. If, therefore, we perceive the state and destiny of man in this life to be so largely influenced by the plan or purpose of God, why should we hesitate in recognizing the operation of the same principle in regard to their future state and destiny? Should we not rather expect to find here, as elsewhere, a close and beautiful analogy between the economy of grace and the constitution of nature and providence?—*Rev. Robert Frew, D.D.*

IV. The Doctrine stated according to the Scriptural Interpretations of the Early Church and Patristic Theology.

1 As to the election intimated in Holy Scripture.

[13022] In illustration of the general teaching of Holy Scripture . . . we read of God's "electing," of an "election," and of the "elect." Thus "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before Him in love" (Eph. i. 4). "We are bound to give thanks alway for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. iii. 13). St. Peter addresses his first epistle to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 1). St. Paul also speaks of "the purpose of God according to election," as not being "of works, but of Him that calleth" (Rom. ix. 11), and of a "remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. xi. 5). And to the Thessalonians, "Knowing brethren beloved your election of God, for our gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance" (1 Thess. i. 4). And St. Peter speaks of the church at Babylon as "elected together with you" (1 Pet. v. 13), and says, "make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet. i. 10). The "elect" are also frequently named. "For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matt. xxiv. 22). "If it were possible, they (false Christs) shall deceive even the elect" (ibid. v. 24). "Shall not God avenge His own elect" (Luke xviii. 7). "I endure all things for the elect's sake" (2 Tim. ii. 10). "The faith of God's elect" (Titus i. 1). "Put on as the elect of God bowels of mercies" (Col. iii. 12). "Ye are an elect race" (2 Pet. ii. 9). We also read of individuals being elect: St. Paul was an elect vessel (Acts ix. 15); he speaks of Rufus as elect in the Lord (Rom. xvi. 13). And St. John addresses his second epistle to the elect Cyria, and mentions her elect sister.—*Rev. John Henry Blunt, M.A.*

[13023] This election, as intimated in some of the passages quoted above, is represented as being founded on God's foreknowledge and predestination. God foreknows, predestinates, calls, elects, justifies, glorifies. Thus St. Paul says (Rom. viii. 28–30) whom God did foreknow, or as he says in the previous verse, "the called according to purpose," He did predestinate. Mark also the connection of predestination with salvation. Thus St. Paul says, "Ye are saved if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you" (1 Cor. xv. 2). "By grace ye were saved through faith" (Eph. ii. 18). "He hath saved us by the washing of regeneration" (Titus iii. 5). "Baptism doth now save us" (1 Pet. iii. 21). —*Ibid.*

[13024] To sum up the teaching of Holy Scripture which is brought before us. . . . Predestination is God's decree to bestow upon certain persons the blessings of the gospel: this decree is assigned to God's sovereign purpose and grace, and is represented to show that it is fixed and unalterable, as before the foundation of the world or from eternity; it is not to

be attributed to man's foreseen merits, but only to God's sovereign will. Election is the carrying out of this decree of predestination by God's choice of individuals upon whom He bestows the blessings of redemption and salvation, and is carried into effect when they are admitted into the Church by baptism.—*Ibid.*

2 As to the subjects of Divine choice.

[13025] We can only conclude from the passages of Scripture that election is the attribute of the whole body of the baptized. Thus such terms as "predestinated," "elect," or "saved," are applied indiscriminately to all the baptized, or to all members of the churches to whom the Epistles were written. Such terms are not given to a few only amongst professing Christians, as might have been expected from the theory of an irrespective decree of salvation, but are equally applied to all. The Thessalonian Christians, *e.g.*, are told to remember their election, not as if it had conferred special grace on a few only, which insured their salvation, but as being the privilege of all. However unworthy the lives of some of the baptized, as were those of the Corinthians, all are equally spoken of as being elect and chosen to salvation; as many as had been baptized into Christ had put on Christ; all equally had been sanctified and saved in the laver of baptism. Individuals are spoken of as elect to remind them of their privileges, that they had the means of grace and the hope of glory, and to urge them to make their calling and election sure; and not only so, but as a ground of hope and confidence. If God be for us, if we are elected to salvation according to His purpose and grace, what can hinder the fulfilment of His will? What "can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?"—*Ibid.*

[13026] The teaching of Holy Scripture on election . . . is confirmed by the testimony of the ancient Church. The fathers generally, as Bingham says, did not think that by elect was meant a few, but the whole body of Christians, "all who by the waters of baptism had entered into the Church."—*Ibid.*

3 As to the conditional attainment of salvation.

[13027] In describing the whole body of the baptized as being "saved," we may be certain that the word could not be used in an absolute sense as intimating final salvation. All the baptized, as the Scriptures plainly declare or intimate, will not finally be saved. Hence we must consider another doctrine clearly revealed in Scripture, and especially brought before us in the Apostolic Epistles, the possibility of those who are elect, baptized, or saved, finally falling from grace. This possibility is not only indirectly intimated, but also clearly and positively declared. It is intimated in the warnings with which the Epistles abound, addressed to the elect or baptized, that they will be saved if they hold the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. "Take heed, brethren," says the apostle, "lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, for we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb. iii. 6, 12–14; see also Gal. vi. 9; Col. i. 23; 1 Thess. iii. 8; Heb. x. 36; Rev. iii. 3). The meaning of these passages is unmistakable; they clearly imply that the final attainment of salvation is conditional, and depends upon our own earnestness and watchfulness in the spiritual warfare—our continuance in faith and obedience unto the end.—*Ibid.*

[13028] If St. Paul had simply bid us work out our own salvation for ourselves, he would have bid us do what was impossible; we might go on trying hard all our lives, and at the end of them we should find our salvation just as much out of our reach as ever. On the other hand, if he had simply told us that it is God that works in us both to will and to do according to His own pleasure, without telling us what we have to do in consequence, then he would have given us a direct encouragement to go on standing idle all our lives, in the expectation that God will come and save us, in spite of our doing nothing towards securing our salvation; a thing which God has never promised to do, and never will do.—*Rev. Henry Harris, B.D.*

[13029] The apostles not only intimate that the attainment of salvation is conditional; they imply, or rather assert, the possibility of a final fall from grace. There are some striking passages bearing on this point in the Epistle to the Hebrews—"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, it should appear that any of you failed of it," or were shut out of heaven, as the disobedient Israelites out of the promised land (Heb. iv. 1). Again, "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 'to have fallen into apostasy' and renew them again unto repentance . . . whose end is to be burned" (vi. 4–8). "If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (x. 26, 27). "Now the just shall live by faith, but if he draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him: but we are not of them who draw back unto perdition" (x. 38, 39). See also Ezek. xviii. 24, where the righteous man is also spoken of as turning away from his righteousness and dying in his iniquity; see also 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21.—*Rev. John Henry Blunt, M.A.*

[13030] For the very reason that it is God that works in us, we are commanded to work

ourselves. If, indeed, it were not for God's working in us, we should never do anything. We could not lift even a little finger, much less work out our salvation. But when once God has put this will and this power within us, He expects us to make full use of it; He expects us to work hard at our salvation, just as we work hard at any other great work. Only this is the work of works, and He expects us to work at it accordingly; to work at it with fear and trembling, with the full consciousness of its importance and our own weakness, and of the shortness of the time we have to do it in. At the same time, whilst we are hard at work, we must feel and acknowledge that it is not we, but God, who does all the work; we must look daily and hourly up to Him from whom all our strength comes; we must pray every morning for a fresh supply of strength to enable us to do our day's work. We must go on working as incessantly and laboriously as if we had to earn our salvation by our own efforts; and all the while we must feel, and freely confess, that our salvation must come to us as a free gift from God. And so working, and so confessing, we may look confidently forward to the day when our work will be ended, and our salvation secured. And we shall look forward to it in confidence, for the very reason that it is God alone, and not we, who is doing all the work.—*Rev. Henry Harris, B.D.*

[13031] The Fathers expressly teach or imply that the elect or the baptized may finally perish. Thus St. Clement of Rome, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, speaks of the whole "brotherhood of Christians being the elect people of God," bidding them "lift up holy and unpolluted hands to God, who hath made us a part of His election." St. Ignatius, in his Epistle to the Trallians, addresses their church as elect; and speaks of the church at Ephesus as "predestinated before the world began to an enduring and unchangeable glory." In the "Shepherd of Hermas" we read of the elect as synonymous with the baptized Church; and of the possibility of a final fall from grace. "He said unto me, Canst thou tell these things to the elect of God? the Lord hath sworn by His glory concerning the elect—that day being pre-determined—that if any man shall even now sin he shall not be saved" (Visio 2, §§ 1 and 2). "Go, therefore, and relate these wonderful things to the elect of God . . . Woe to the doubtful ones who hear these words and despise them; it had been better for them not to have been born" (Lib. I. Vision iv. § 2).—*Rev. John Henry Blunt, M.A.*

4 As to the inference drawn with regard to the elect and the baptized.

[13032] An objection has been made against the teaching of Holy Scripture that the elect and the baptized are synonymous—that the elect are often spoken of as holy persons living in a state of favour and acceptance with God. Thus God works miracles for the sake of His elect; He hears their prayers "as they cry day and night to Him," and St. Paul endured all things "for the elect's sake." Such statements, at first sight, may lead to the supposition that the elect, *as such*, are God's faithful and obedient servants. But such an inference, though plausible, is certainly without foundation. Men may be holy by profession, as certainly all the baptized are, though as regards many of them the duties and obligations which that profession implies are forgotten and neglected. Should we find it difficult to reconcile with the declaration of Scripture the *professional* or *nominal* holiness only of the multitudes of the baptized, and think that its statements would thus be deceptive or unreal, let us consider the type of the Christian Church, or the Jewish election, and we shall clearly perceive that the objection is baseless, since holiness is affirmed in the most unreserved terms of the Jewish Church, though it is certain that such declarations can only be understood with considerable latitude or a vast number of exceptions. The Jews are spoken of as a holy nation, a peculiar people. Balaam, speaking by Divine inspiration, says, "God hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel" (Numb. xxiii. 21). Now, compare this with another account of the same people: "The Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold it is a stiffnecked people" (Exod. xxxii. 9); or with the description given of them by their own lawgiver: "From the day that thou didst depart out of Egypt, until ye came to this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord" (Deut. ix. 7). Strange account to hear of a "holy" nation, in whom God "had seen no iniquity," a "kingdom of priests" consecrated to the Lord's service! It is at least unquestionable that men may in a certain sense be called holy, as being such by profession (as were the Jews), and that the word does not necessarily imply real holiness. Yet let it not be supposed that the language of Scripture is in any degree delusive, or can be charged with unreality. Israel *was* a holy nation; to them pertained the adoption, the glory, the covenant, . . . and amidst thousands of rebels and idolators there were thousands who had not "bowed the knee to the image of Baal"—holy persons, God's true and accepted servants; just as we read at a later period of their history of some "who departed not from the temple day and night, serving God with fasting and prayers."—*Ibid.*

V. Teaching of St. Paul upon the Doctrine, and its Application by the Church of England.

[13033] There can be no doubt that the doctrine of predestination is contained in Scripture. A single chapter out of one of St. Paul's Epistles will be enough to prove this to be so. Writing then to his fellow-believers at Ephesus, he says, "God hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having pre-

destinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." From this passage, then, and many more might be quoted to the same purpose, it is evident that we must accept the doctrine of God's predestination of His own children as part of our belief; and the importance as well as difficulty of the doctrine is shown, by its forming the subject of by far the longest of the Articles of our Church. This Article begins as follows: "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, He hath constantly decreed by His counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ unto everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose, by His Spirit working in due season; they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting happiness." This, then, is our Church's statement of the docrine of predestination. And what I would specially insist upon is, that she conveys this doctrine to us in almost the very words of Scripture. She neither tries to explain the meaning of it away, nor does she, on the other hand, push it to conclusions which Scripture itself does not warrant. To show more fully what I mean in saying this, I will give an example of the way in which the doctrine of predestination is sometimes explained away, so as to mean almost nothing; and then I will give another example, to show how it is sometimes made to mean a great deal more than Scripture itself means by it, and a great deal that Scripture openly contradicts in other parts of its teaching.

The doctrine of predestination is explained away, or nearly so, by some persons, when they represent it as simply the result of God's foreknowledge. . . . God does undoubtedly foresee all that is going to take place. He knows what we are going to do, as clearly as He knows what we have done, or are doing at the present moment. All things are alike present to Him; He surveys with one glance the wide field of past, and present, and future, through which we are slowly moving.

But though the doctrine of God's foreknowledge is in itself a perfectly correct one, it does not wholly account for the doctrine of predestination. If God's predestination of us were nothing else than the result of His foreknowledge of what we are going to do, there would be no excuse for St. Paul in making such use as he does of the doctrine of predestination, and insisting so strongly as he does upon it, as affording a motive to our exertions. For it would do us no good to be constantly reminded that God knew beforehand everything that we are going to do, and that He had already settled, in consequence, what is to become of us. Our being told this would not have the effect of making us any the more earnest in working out our salvation, though it might very possibly have the opposite effect upon us, and dispose us to do less. And therefore we may be sure that St. Paul meant something more by his doctrine of God's predestination of us, than simply His knowledge beforehand what we should do, and His treatment of us accordingly, or otherwise St. Paul would never have made the use of the doctrine which he has done.—*Rev. Henry Harris, B.D.*

[13034] In her views on this deep subject, the Church of England is neither Calvinistic nor Arminian: her aim at least is to be Scriptural. As opposed to Calvin, she altogether excludes the doctrine of reprobation. The assertion that certain persons are chosen to condemnation is nowhere found in her Articles, her Homilies, or her Liturgy. Such doctrine appears to be utterly at variance with the revealed character of God, who "willeth not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," and is virtually condemned by our Lord in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew, where he describes the King as saying to "them on His right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" but adds, "Then shall He say also unto them on His left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared (not for you, but) for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 34, 41).

As opposed to Arminius, our Church refers the cause or ground of God's election, not to the foreseen faith of His people, but to His own good pleasure, His counsel secret to us.—*Rev. Sir Emilius Bayley, B.D.*

[13035] The doctrine is occasionally pushed to extremes which shock all our instinctive feelings of justice, besides openly contradicting some of the plainest teaching of Scripture. It has been argued, then, somewhat as follows: "Since God has predestinated some to everlasting happiness, and others to eternal misery, it is of no use my trying to alter the sentence which was passed upon me before I was born." . . . To such a mode of argument . . . we reply that the Bible goes from first to last on the very opposite principle; it never allows God's elect to rest for a moment upon the certainty of their salvation; it keeps urging them again and again to make their calling and election sure, to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. And so, on the other hand, it does not give up any as hopelessly and irreclaimably lost. It keeps reminding us that God does not will the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn to Him and live.—*Rev. Henry Harris, B.D.*

[13036] The Church of England recognizes the doctrine of predestination in its twofold aspect. The doctrine of predestination to

grace is implied in the Catechism, in which every baptized child is taught to "believe in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth *him* and all the elect people of God," and in the collect of All Saints' Day, where the elect are spoken of as knit together in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of Christ, or in the Church, the elect unquestionably meaning all the baptized or members of the Church. In the 17th Article predestination to glory is affirmed; and, according to the wording of the Article, no other interpretation appears tenable than that all the elect or the predestinate are there represented as being finally saved.—*Rev. John Henry Blunt, M.A.*

VI. Points of Difference between the Apostolic Doctrine and that taught by Calvinism.

[13037] Are the references to the idea of election in the New Testament such, as a general thing, that they may be fairly construed in the known and established sense of the Calvinistic dogma? or are they so circumstanced and conditioned as to require plainly a different interpretation? On this point there is no room for any serious doubt. The New Testament doctrine of election, as it meets us, for instance, in the Epistles of St. Peter, and rules continually the thinking and writing of St. Paul, is something essentially different from the doctrine of election which is presented to our view in Calvin's "Institutes." The proof of this is found sufficiently in one single consideration. The Calvinistic election involves, beyond the possibility of failure, the full salvation at last of all those who are its subjects; there is no room to conceive of their coming short of this result in any single instance, made certain as it is in the form of a specific purpose and pre-determination in the Divine mind from all eternity. . . . The "elect" in Calvin's sense have no power really to fall from grace or come short of everlasting life. But plainly the "elect" of whom the New Testament speaks, the "chosen and called of God" in the sense of St. Peter and St. Paul, are not supposed to possess any such advantage; on the contrary, it is assumed in all sorts of ways that their condition carries with it, in the present world, no prerogative of certain ultimate salvation whatever. . . . Plainly, we repeat, the two conceptions are not the same. The difference here brought into view is such as to show unanswerably that the Calvinistic dogma is one thing, and the common New Testament idea of election altogether another. The Calvinistic election terminates on the absolute salvation of its subjects; that forms the precise end and scope of it in such sort that there is no room to conceive of its failing to reach this issue in any single case. The New Testament election, as it enters into the teaching of St. Peter and St. Paul, terminates manifestly on a state or condition short of absolute salvation. Whatever the distinction may involve, for those who are its subjects, in the way of saving grace, it does not reach out at once to the full issue of eternal life. The fact it serves to establish and make certain for them is of quite another character and kind, it sets them in the way of salvation, but it does not make their salvation sure.—*Dr. Nevin.*

[13038] Calvinism teaches that by the decree of God some men are foreordained to everlasting death; Paul teaches that it is the will of God "that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." Calvinism teaches that "neither are any other redeemed by Christ, . . . but the elect only;" Paul teaches that "Christ gave Himself a ransom for all." Calvinism teaches that God's choice falls on men when they are not "in Christ," and brings them into union with Him that they may receive the forgiveness of sins and eternal life; Paul teaches that the elect are those who are "in Christ," and that being in Him they enter into the possession of those eternal blessings which before the foundation of the world it was God's purpose, His decree, to confer upon all Christians. According to the Calvinistic conception, some men who are still "children of wrath, even as the rest," to use a phrase which occurs later in this epistle, are among the "elect," and will therefore some day become children of God. That is a mode of speech foreign to Paul's thought; according to Paul no man is elect except he is "in Christ." We are all among the non-elect until we are in Him. But once in Christ, we are caught in the currents of the eternal purposes of the Divine love; we belong to the elect race; all things are ours; we are the children of God and the heirs of His glory. God has "blessed us with every spiritual blessing . . . *in Christ*." God "chose us *in Him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."—*R. W. Dale, D.D.*

VII. Points of Difference between St. Augustine's Doctrine and that taught by Calvinism.

[13039] The theory of Calvin was a revival . . . with certain modifications of the predestination theories of St. Augustine, whose works the reformer frequently cites, and to whose authority he mainly appeals. . . . The especial difference between Augustinism and Calvinism was, that according to the former system, God was not in any degree chargeable with the sin of Adam and of his posterity. The other important difference related to the grace of holy baptism, St. Augustine believing in the real bestowal of sacramental grace, or that all the baptized in and through baptism were regenerated. Calvin did not believe that grace in any real sense was bestowed on the non-elect. If given at all, it is represented as the shadow rather than the substance of a Divine gift; or a deceptive or illusive grace intended to render them excusable. Effectual grace leading to salvation was given only to the elect; hence he

limits the grace of regeneration or adoption to the elect amongst the baptized.—*Rev. John Henry Blunt, M.A.*

[13040] It is undeniable that the Augustinian doctrine has been held by many of the greatest and subtlest intellects from Augustine's time till now. It has a sort of fascination, especially for masculine and vigorous natures. Is not the explanation probably to be found in the fact that such natures find "a deep peace" in the belief that their own greatest efforts are not really efforts at all, but the natural fruits of a Divine necessity; that they can neither fail nor succeed so long as they obey implicitly, but only transmit the energies and register the decrees of a diviner might and wisdom? No doubt there is a great fascination in a mode of thought which almost obliterates the human instrument in the grandeur of the inevitable purpose. Calvinism is a personal and Christian way of merging the individual in the grandeur of a universal destiny.—*Spectator.*

[13041] Perhaps the greatest danger in the tendencies of modern thought is that of the subversion of the moral freedom of man by the general acceptance of the doctrine that physical law is just as valid in the moral world as in the material. That the Calvinistic doctrine tends in this direction cannot be denied. And this tendency is doubtless one of the grounds, if not the chief ground, of the modern reaction against Augustinianism among spiritual thinkers (as distinguished from materialists) on the one hand, and of the various schemes of modified Augustinianism which have been proposed within the theological sphere as substitutes for extreme Calvinism—as Baxterianism, the so-called moderate Calvinism, and the New England theology.—*McClintock and Strong.*

VIII. Statement by the Westminster Confession of Faith on the Doctrine of Election.

[13042] We desire to examine the Westminster Confession of Faith on the great subject of predestination. What does it say hereon? It says that "God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby God is neither the Author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established." In these words you have a grand saving clause, most comprehensive in its import and application—a clause which governs all which is advanced on this subject by the Confession: this saving clause is, first, that God must not be made the Author of sin; second, that no violence must be offered to the will of the creature, which will must be regarded as free; third, that the liberty of second causes must be left untouched, and that there is contingency in the world. I wish for nothing more than these three watchtowers which the Confession has itself set up as beacons of light, and as sources of caution and of consideration, in forming our conclusions on this great subject.—*Rev. George Jamieson.*

IX. Answers to Objections urged against the Doctrine.

[13043] St. Paul, in the ninth chapter of Romans, deals with two objections which are usually urged against the doctrine of election: 1. That it is inconsistent with God's justice (vers. 14–18). 2. That it interferes with human responsibility (vers. 19–24). In his reply the apostle exhibits wonderful tact and skill. He does not touch upon the philosophical aspects of the doctrine, around which, in the present order of things, clouds and darkness must ever rest.

As to the first objection, he shows that the doctrine of election is not inconsistent with Divine justice by an appeal to the Pentateuch, where we find God acting both in the exercise of mercy (vers. 15, 16) and of judgment (vers. 17, 18), on the principle of free, sovereign choice. As the apostle was dealing with those who admitted the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, such an answer was sufficient and complete. After all, with our finite faculties and present knowledge, it is impossible, without the aid of revelation, to handle such deep and abstract questions as to what is and what is not inconsistent with God's justice in His dealings with a fallen race.

As to the second objection, he deals with it as one not so much of an intellectual as of a moral character. Such a cavil on the part of man as to the Divine procedure springs from an evil heart of unbelief. It calls for rebuke rather than for reasoning. It is occasioned by a mistake altogether as to the relationship of the Creator to His sinful creatures. The human race, being universally guilty and condemned, has no claim upon God for mercy. Even if any of us should urge the fact that we inherit Adam's entail of sin, yet our consciences assure us that, after making all allowances on that score, we have not lived up to our light, and have a sense of guilt, as not only being one of a fallen race, but as viewed in our individual capacity.

Hence the apostle disposes of this cavilling objection, of this expression of a rebellious spirit, by pointing out: 1. That such is not a fitting attitude for the creature to assume in regard to the Creator. It is altogether to leave our province (vers. 19–21). 2. That God, however, even in His punitive acts, deals with leniency and for benevolent purposes (vers. 22–24).

The apostle next shows that in the Old Testament the calling of the Gentiles and the preservation of only a remnant of Israel was foretold (vers. 25–29).

From the Divine aspect of the question he now passes on to the human. He shows that unbelief and wilfulness on the part of the Jews

explain and justify their rejection (vers. 30–33). —*C. N.*

[13044] It is objected that this doctrine tends to the neglect of all use of means. But this assumes that the end is decreed without the means, and also that the certainty of an event acts as a motive to neglect all means of attaining it; which is contrary to reason and experience.—*Dr. C. Hodge.*

[13045] It is objected that the doctrine of decrees amounts to the doctrine of fatalism. But the only point of argument is that both assume absolute certainty in the sequence of events. They differ (1) as to the ground of that certainty; (2) the nature of the influence by which it is secured; (3) the ends contemplated; and (4) in their natural effects on the reason and conscience of men.—*Ibid.*

[13046] The gospel never sets itself at work to hinder any sinner's faith by a disclosure of the doctrine of election, or check his repentance by a dozen texts on inability, or discourage his prayer for pardon with a dogma as to the extent of the atonement. It does say, however, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—*Rev. C. Robinson, D.D.*

[13047] It is urged that the foreordination of all events is inconsistent with the free agency of man. The force of this objection depends on what is meant by free act. To decide whether two things are inconsistent, the nature of each must be determined. By the decrees of God are to be understood the purpose of God rendering certain the occurrence of future events. By a free act is meant an act of rational self-determination by an intelligent person. If such an act is from its very nature contingent, or uncertain, then it is clear that foreordination is inconsistent with free agency. But then foreknowledge is equally inconsistent with it. What is foreknown must be certain, as well as what is foreordained.—*Dr. C. Hodge.*

[13048] The one great stumbling-block in the way of our acceptance of the doctrine of predestination is this, that the doctrine appears to represent God as arbitrarily selecting some men for a state of everlasting happiness, and abandoning the remainder to destruction, without any good reason for making such a selection. God Himself does not give us the precise reason why He does so, and therefore we conclude that He has none to give. But it does not in the least follow, that because God does not think fit to give us His reason for acting as He does, that therefore He has none; there can be no manner of doubt that God has the very best of reasons for what He does. At the same time, He does not choose to be accountable to us for everything He does. And besides this, we should not be able, as we are at present situated and constituted, to enter into His explanations, even if He thought fit to offer them to us. The whole subject is quite out of the range alike of our knowledge and of our comprehension. And therefore God says to us, "Wait a little, some day I shall be able to make you understand it all; and meanwhile you must have patience, and take My word for it that I have ordered every single thing for the best. You yourselves will sooner or later be forced to confess that I could not have acted otherwise than I have actually done."—*Rev. Henry Harris, B.D.*

X. The Mystery of Election.

[13049] The subject is doubtless one that belongs to the deep things of God, and therefore the clearest possible statement of it must leave an impenetrable veil resting on some portions of the theme, and afford room for that exclamation of Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"—*Rev. Robert Frew, D.D.*

[13050] The doctrine, in some form at least, is one which we cannot escape from: we find it in Scripture, we find it in the world around us. Some are born in a Christian, others in a heathen land; some with pious, others with ungodly parents; some are nursed in ignorance, poverty, and vice; others in the fulness of temporal comfort and spiritual light. Why this is so, we cannot tell. We know that such is God's good pleasure; but the secret motives of His will are not revealed, and we cannot fathom them. What we are taught is to avail ourselves of the privileges which we undoubtedly possess. There is a darkness around us which is impenetrable; but sufficient light is afforded to enable us to walk securely. Our duty is to work and wait. "What I do thou knowest not now: but thou shalt know hereafter" (John xiii. 7).—*Rev. Sir Emilius Bayley, B.D.*

[13051] The mysteriousness of the election of grace is evident from the fact that to some nations only, and thus to certain individuals, has the gospel been preached; others have been left in heathen darkness, "without hope and without God in the world." The Apostle Paul was forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia, and when he essayed to go into Bithynia was not suffered by the Spirit (Acts xvi. 6). In a vision he saw a man of Macedonia, saying, "Come and help us," by which he gathered that the Lord had called him to preach the gospel there. Our Lord also clearly intimates God's sovereignty in the bestowal of His good gifts, when He says that many widows were in Israel in the days of Elisha, but to none of them was he sent but to a widow of Sarepta (Luke xiv. 25–27), and that if the mighty works done in Chorazin and Bethsaida had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes (Matt. xi. 21). Such is God's mysterious decree of predestination to grace (widely

differing, indeed, from the Calvinistic theory of an irrespective decree of salvation, since it does not imply that all to whom the gospel is not preached, whatever may be their state of darkness and ignorance, will be eternally lost), but still a mysterious decree, not to be fathomed by man's wisdom, or reconciled to his notions of equity. "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?"—*Rev. John Henry Blunt, M.A.*

[13052] Why is it, if the spirits of all men are equally and absolutely beneath the control of the Creator, that any are suffered to remain in darkness? There is no answer to such a question, for, take up the great enigma of the doings of God and the destinies of man at what end you may, make your way through the difficulties that beset you as far as you can, sooner or later you reach the point where explanation fails, and where there is nothing left for us but to join with Him who said, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."—*Rev. W. Hanna, D.D., LL.D.*

[13053] There are some men who claim to know all about the matter. It is the shallowness of their minds that permits them to see to the bottom of their knowledge. The fact is that the great questions about man's responsibility, free will, and predestination, have been fought over and over again; and the result has been that we know just as much about the matter as when we first began.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

XI. The Evidences of its Truth.

1 Deduced from the Divine perfections of immutability and foreknowledge.

[13054] If we could suppose the Deity to be wiser, and better, and mightier at some times than at others, we might suppose that with every accession of knowledge, goodness, and power He would form some new design. But He is always the same, and as His character never alters, so His purposes never alter. Hence the Divine immutability secures the doctrine of election.—*Buck's Theological Dictionary.*

[13055] For God who made man did Himself prepare in his predestination both the gift of illumination to believe and the gift of perseverance to profit and preserve, and the gift of glorification to reign, for such to whom He pleased to give it; who also doth not any otherways perform in deed than was ordained by His unchangeable will. The truth of which predestination, whereby the apostle witnesseth we were predestinated in Christ before the foundation of the world, if any one refuse to receive with the belief of the heart, or to utter with the confession of the mouth, if before the last day of this present life he doth not lay aside the obstinacy of his impiety, whereby as a rebel he withstandeth the true and living God, it is manifest that he doth not belong to the number of those which God did before the foundation of the world freely choose in Christ and predestinated unto the kingdom.—*Fulgentius.*

[13056] It surely were derogatory to God's wisdom to suppose that in any region of His working He works without a previous plan or purpose, or to suppose that the salvation of His people is the only work which He accomplishes without such plan. As a matter of fact, whatever view may be taken of election, a certain number of the human race only are saved, and it is a manifest absurdity to suppose that God has saved them without having determined so to do. Again, the Divine foreknowledge necessarily implies that the events foreknown entered into a purpose or plan. A contingent or uncertain event cannot be foreknown. "There must," says Edwards, "be a certainty in things themselves before they are certainly known, or (which is the same thing) known to be certain." And what is it that makes them thus certain but the Divine purpose or decree? The application of this to the doctrine of election is too obvious to be stated.—*Rev. Robert Frew, D.D.*

[13057] In the very beginning, when this great universe lay in the mind of God, like unborn forests in the acorn-cup; long ere the echoes waked the solitudes, before the mountains were brought forth, and long ere the light flashed through the sky, God loved His chosen creatures. Before there was creatureship—when the ether was not fanned by the angel's wing, when space itself had not an existence, when there was nothing save God alone, even then, in that loneliness of Deity, and in that deep quiet and profundity, His bowels moved for His chosen. Their names were written on His heart, and they were dear to His soul.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

[13058] If God knew from eternity who should be saved, it must have been because of His eternal decree to save them. This argument, we know, is boldly met, sometimes, by denying the Divine foreknowledge of the acts of moral agents. This, it is said, is no more derogatory to God than to say that there are things which even Omnipotence cannot achieve. But these things are such as involve a contradiction in their very statement, as that "God cannot inclose a triangle within two straight lines, and cannot make two parallel lines meet, and cannot make twice two equal five. These are inherent impossibilities manifestly, and imply no defect of power on the part of God. We cannot conceive them to be done. But it is not so in regard to a knowledge of future moral acts. It is conceivable. There is nothing in their nature which renders them inherently unknowable; and ignorance of them implies a defect of knowledge inconsistent with our idea of an omniscient God" ("Bibliotheca Sacra," 1862).—*Rev. Robert Frew, D.D.*

[13059] It is just as certain that God deter-

mined from eternity who would be saved as that He knew from eternity who would not be saved. . . . All the objections which lie against the doctrine of election lie with equal force against the Divine foreknowledge.—*Buck's Theological Dictionary.*

XII. Its Relations.

1 To faith.

[13060] It is plain we are not to make election a ground for our faith, but our faith and calling a medium or argument to prove our election. Election indeed is first in order of Divine acting —God chooseth before we believe; yet faith is first in our acting—we must believe before we can know we be elected; yea, by believing we know it. The husbandman knows it is spring by the sprouting of the grass, though he hath no astrology to know the position of the heavens; thou mayest know thou art elect, as surely by a work of grace in thee, as if thou hadst stood by God's elbow when He writ thy name in the book of life.—*W. Gurnall, M.A.*

2 To freewill.

[13061] We are well aware that the Scriptures represent it to be impossible for men to do what they are unwilling to do. Hence, says our Saviour, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." His idea doubtless is, that men cannot come to Him because they are unwilling to come; for He had just said in the course of this same address, "And ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life." He supposes that mere unwillingness renders it impossible for them to come. This mode of speaking not only runs through the Bible, but is agreeable to the plainest dictates of reason and common sense. While, therefore, it is proper to say that men cannot do what they are unwilling to do, it is also proper to say that they can do what they are willing to do. They are as capable of doing right, if so disposed, as of doing wrong. The doctrine of election leaves them in full possession of all their powers as moral agents, and all possible liberty to choose or refuse the offers of mercy.—*Buck's Theological Dictionary.*

XIII. Its Practical Applications.

[13062] The election of grace is, like the bestowal of citizenship upon a subject, not on account of services previously rendered, nor for those expected or likely to be given in the future, but solely in pursuance of the sovereign's good pleasure; independent altogether of every consideration as far as the individual is personally concerned: thus its advantages afford no ground of boasting; but, though secured, are of no avail unless used.—*C. N.*

[13063] The fact of God's having thought fit to reveal Himself to us in His Son Jesus Christ is in itself a sure pledge of His having predestinated us to everlasting life, provided we on our parts exercise our own choice and liberty of action by closing with the offer which He has so distinctly made to us, and walking in the way which He has set so plainly before us. And the more careful we are in attending to the directions which He has given us for walking in this way, the more secure we shall feel of His guidance and protection throughout our journey. And so with this feeling of God's love and care for us constantly stirring us up to fresh exertions, and our exertions strengthening our assurance, we shall go boldly and cheerfully forward, till we come to the everlasting happiness which He has provided for us. This, then, is the use, and the only use, which Scripture sanctions of the doctrine of predestination. —*Rev. Henry Harris, B.D.*

[13064] Though the mariner see not the pole-star, yet the needle of the compass that points to it tells him which way he sails. Thus the heart that is touched with the loadstone of Divine love, trembling with godly fear, and yet still looking towards God by fixed believing, points at the love of election, and tells the soul that its course is heavenward, towards the heaven of eternal rest.—*Abp. Leighton.*

[13065] Although the doctrine may be a stumbling-block to some, it may, it ought, to prove a blessed stay to many. It kindles love; it assures of victory: many a tried and suffering Christian has found unspeakable comfort in the assurance of God's eternal and unchanging love; and when the dark cloud of tribulation has pressed heavily upon him, has rejoiced in knowing that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. viii. 28). "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make yonr calling," and with it, "your election sure" (2 Pet. i. 10).—*Rev. Sir Emilius Bayley, B.D.*

[13066] As to the doctrine being, as has sometimes been alleged, a "purely speculative dogma, barren of all practical results, exercising no influence on our conduct whatever, and consequently not to be taught as a revealed truth," we simply ask, "Is it nothing to have a settled conviction that the entire glory of our salvation, from first to last, belongs to God? Is such a conviction barren? Is it not fitted to awaken gratitude and love? And are not these the great moral forces by which obedience to God is secured and maintained?" Undoubtedly, too, that profound humility and sense of human littleness, which spring from a just contemplation of this doctrine, are no mean practical results, and are at the same time causes, in their turn, of the highest forms of devotedness to God which the Church or the world has ever seen.—*Rev. Robert Frew, D.D.*

[13067] 'Tis hard to climb up into election: but if we find the fruits of holiness springing

up in our hearts, we may conclude the Sun of Righteousness hath risen there.

[13068] There is no way for men to discern their names written in the book of life but by reading the work of sanctification in their own hearts. I desire no miraculous voice from heaven, no extraordinary signs, or unscriptural notices and informations in this matter. Lord, let me but find my heart obeying Thy calls; my will obediently submitting to Thy commands; sin my burden, and Christ my desire: I never crave a fairer or surer evidence of Thy electing love to my soul: and if I had an oracle from heaven, an extraordinary messenger from the other world, to tell me Thou lovest me, I have no reason to credit such a voice, whilst I find my heart wholly sensual, averse to God, and indisposed to all that is spiritual.—*Flavel.*

[13069] Two links of the chain (namely election and salvation) are up in heaven in God's own hand; but this middle one (that is effectual calling) is let down to earth, into the hearts of His children, and they, laying hold on it, have sure hold of the other two: for no power can sever them. If, therefore, they can read the character of God's image in their own souls, those are the counterpart of the golden characters of His love, in which their names are written in the book of life. Their believing writes their names under the promises of the revealed book of life—the Scriptures, and so ascertains them, that the same names are in the secret book of life which God hath by Himself from eternity. So that finding the stream of grace in their hearts, though they see not the fountain whence it flows, nor the ocean into which it returns, yet they know that it hath its source in their eternal election, and shall empty itself into the ocean of their eternal salvation. . . . We are not to pry into the decree, but to read it in the performance. He that loves may be sure that he was loved first: and he that chooses God for his delight and portion may conclude confidently that God hath chosen him to be one of those that shall enjoy Him, and be happy in Him for ever; for that our love and electing of Him is but the return and repercussion of the beams of His love shining upon us.—*Abp. Leighton.*

[13070] We need not dive into the deep counsels of God; we need not yearn to read that mysterious roll in which is inscribed the catalogue of the saints of the Most High. The decree of God's purpose is written on man's heart; and the inscription is holiness. Such is evidently the teaching of the apostle: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose." The called according to His purpose are those who "love Him"—who have within them the constraining motive of all obedience, the life of religion and well-spring of charity—that first and great commandment, which those who keep are His, and those who do not are Christians but in name.—*Bp. Jackson.*

PART IV.

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION C. (*Continued.*)

[2] Adoption.

SYLLABUS.

	PAGE
I. General Nature of Adoption	448
II. Spiritual Significance of Adoption	448
III. Its Primary Source	449
IV. Its Legal and Moral Basis	449
V. Its Instrumental Cause	450
VI. Its "Outward and Visible Sign"	451
VII. Its Obligations	451
VIII. Its Privileges	451
IX. Homiletical Applications	452

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION C. (*Continued.*)

2

ADOPTION.

I. Its General Nature.

[13071] The nature of adoption may be explained in the following manner. A child is, in this act, taken by a man from a family not his own; introduced into his own family, regarded as his own child, and entitled to all the privileges and blessings belonging to the relation. To adopt children in this manner has, it is well known, been a custom generally prevailing in all nations. Thus children were adopted amongst the Egyptians, Jews, Romans, and other ancient nations; and the same custom exists in the Christian nations of Europe, in our own country, among the American aborigines, and, so far as our knowledge extends, throughout the world.—*Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge.*

II. Spiritual Significance of Adoption.

1 Its theological sense.

[13072] Adoption is that act by which we who were alienated, and enemies, and disinherited, are made the sons of God and heirs of His eternal glory; . . . where it is to be remarked that it is not in our own right, nor in the right of any work done in us, or which we ourselves do, though it should be an evangelical work, that we become heirs; but jointly with Christ and in His right.—*Dwight.*

[13073] Adoption is a rich blessing of the covenant of grace, taking a stranger or alien into the relation of son and heir. It is a state of membership in the family of God, the blessed result of union and communion with the Lord Jesus in His Sonship as justification is union and communion with Christ in His righteousness; and sanctification is union and communion with Christ in His holiness, or His holy character and nature; so, by parity of reason, adoption must be held to be union and communion with Christ in His Sonship; surely the highest and best union and communion of the three.—*Candlish, D.D.*

2 Its contrast to civil adoption.

[13074] It is easy to conceive the propriety of the term adoption as used by the apostle in reference to this act, though it must be confessed there is some difference between civil and spiritual adoption. Civil adoption was allowed of and provided for the relief of those who had no children; but in spiritual adoption this relation does not appear. The Almighty was under no obligation to do this; for He had innumerable spirits whom He had created, besides His own Son, who had all the perfections of the Divine nature, who was the object of His delight, and who is styled the Heir of all things (Heb. i. 3). When men adopt, it is on account of some excellency in the persons who are adopted; thus Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses because he was exceeding fair (Acts vii. 20, 21), and Mordecai adopted Esther because she was his uncle's daughter, and exceeding fair (Esther ii. 7); but man has nothing in him that merits this Divine act (Ezek. xvi. 5). In civil adoption, though the name of a son be given, the nature of a son may not; this relation may not necessarily be attended with any change of disposition or temper. But in spiritual adoption we are made partakers of the Divine nature.—*Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge.*

[13075] Firstly, in the legal adoption of the old Romans, the advantages were not all on the side of the child, the adopter would be equally served by it, if not more so. He would have an object on which to bestow his affections, a co-operator in the formation and development of his plans, a companion and a stay in his old age. But in Divine adoption the advantages are all on one side. The Eternal gains nothing by it.

Secondly, the one indicates a want on the part of the adopter. Legally no one would adopt the child of another if he had a sufficient number of his own. He felt the want of some one to sustain the relation of a son to him. Not so with the Eternal; His family is unbounded, angels are His sons, and they are "an innumerable company."

Thirdly, the one does not necessarily involve the true spirit of relationship. In legal adoption the spirit of the relationship on both sides

might be, and perhaps often was, wanting. The child might have been entirely destitute of all filial love and reverence, and the adopter of all parental affection and tenderness. Not so with the Divine adoption. It is, in truth, the spirit that forms the relationship. A man becomes the son of God by coming in possession of the true filial disposition. All men are His offspring, but those only are His children who feel towards Him as all children should feel towards such a Father. The generating in the human heart of this filial feeling is the grand object of Christ's mission, and is represented in the gospel under the terms "repentance," "regeneration," "conversion," &c.

Fourthly, the one only continues through this mortal life. The King of Terrors abrogates the law, dissolves for ever the connection. But the relation between the Eternal Father and the objects of His gracious adoption will survive all earthly things, and flourish in the eternal hereafter. "Who shall separate us from the love of God?" &c.

3 **Its distinction from, and superiority to, the sonship of the older covenant.**

[13076] In Scripture the people of God are constantly spoken of as His children, the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty; as such, not by nature but by grace, not by birth but by a sovereign act of favour on God's part. It is as marking this distinction that the word *adoption* has its special significancy; it expresses at once the nature of the privilege and the manner in which it is bestowed. It is peculiarly a New Testament term; for though the idea of sonship often occurs in the Old Testament in connection with the chosen people, it is only by the revelation of Jesus Christ that we have clearly explained to us on what ground, in what way, and to what extent this privilege can be enjoyed by fallen creatures.—*Rev. William Laughton.*

[13077] Christian adoption is to be distinguished from the sonship of Adam, who is spoken of as the Son of God (Luke iii. 38); because, as the first man, he derived his being immediately from the hand of God, and was made in God's image and likeness; this was the sonship of Creation. . . . It must also be distinguished from the sonship or adoption ascribed to the ancient people (Exod. iv. 22–23; Jer. iii. 19; Rom. ix. 4). This, as regarded the nation at large, and the earthly inheritance which they enjoyed, was only a typical adoption—the shadow and not the substance. The true saints of God, indeed, in Old Testament times had a spiritual sonship, essentially the same as that which is enjoyed under the gospel; though, in the measure of its manifestation to them, and of their present enjoyment of it, it fell far short of the Christian privilege (Gal. iv. 1–7). —*Ibid.*

[13078] Old Testament believers could not have more than a very partial revelation of it; for the grace and love of God were not manifested with any such distinctness as they are now, in the person, and word, and work of Jesus. The law, under which believers were then placed, naturally tended to produce a spirit of bondage and fear; its effect upon the conscience, to some extent, interfered with the freedom of sonship. Hence they are compared to the heir while he is a child, under tutors and governors, kept under restraint no better than a servant, as regards the present enjoyment of his privilege, though in reality lord of all. Add to all this that the Holy Ghost was not yet given; the dispensation of the Spirit had not come; the communication of grace and of spiritual light to the souls of believers was comparatively limited and partial; and it will be manifest how imperfect must have been their understanding and enjoyment of the privilege of sonship, though it did really belong to them. It is otherwise with New Testament believers. In the gospel they have a clear discovery of the riches of God's grace, as well as of His gracious purposes of kindness towards those who enjoy this particular privilege, and of the ground and manner of their entering into it through the mediatorial work of Christ. Besides, along with this revelation, they have the gift of the Spirit in all the fulness of His gracious influences to open their understanding, and to bear witness with their spirit that they are the children of God. Thus they receive the adoption of sons, as regards the actual enjoyment of it. See the contrast between the law and the gospel in this respect strikingly illustrated in Gal. iv.—*Ibid.*

III. Its Primary Source.

1 **The triune Godhead.**

[13079] Adoption is an act of God's free grace (Ezek. xvi. 3–6; Rom. iv. 16, 17). Of God the Father in His eternal purpose, and predestinating favour (Eph. i. 5, 6, 11). God the Son in His redemptive work, rescuing His people from the tyranny of Satan, and incorporating them into vital union with Himself (Gal. iii. 26, iv. 4, 5; Heb. ii. 10–13). God the Holy Spirit in His applying and witnessing work, as "the Spirit of adoption" (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6).—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

IV. Its Legal and Moral Basis.

[13080] Adoption (*υἱοθεσία*) is not "the sonship," but "the adoption as sons." Christ's coming conferred upon men the privileges of sons, which they had before only potentially and prospectively. Adoption exists for all, is appropriated and realized by faith, and will be consummated hereafter. Adoption rests upon the legal basis of justification, and upon the moral principle of regeneration. It is an external act of God in His character of a Father bestowing upon us social status. It implies that God will perform a Father's part to us, and

requires that we discharge filial and brotherly duties.—*C. N.*

[13081] There is no adoption without regeneration. Adoption is not a mere relation; the privilege and the image of the sons of God go together. A state of adoption is never without a separation from defilement (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18). The new name in adoption is never given till the new creature be formed. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14). Yet these are to be distinguished. Regeneration as a physical act gives us a likeness to God in our nature; adoption as a legal act gives us a right to an inheritance. Regeneration makes us formally His sons by conveying a principle (1 Pet. i. 23). Adoption makes us relatively His sons by conveying a power (John i. 12). By the one we are instated in the Divine affection; by the other we are partakers of the Divine nature.—*Charnock.*

[13082] In the case of legal adoption amongst men, the adopted son might have the rights and privileges of sonship, although destitute of filial affection and obedience. But in Divine adoption they are inseparably combined; for no one is adopted who is not also *born from above.—J. Buchanan, D.D.* (*condensed*).

[13083] In the early fathers adoption seems to have been regarded as the effect of baptism. The Romanist theologians generally do not treat of adoption as a separate theological topic; nor, indeed, does their system admit it. According to the old Lutheran theology, adoption takes place at the same time with regeneration and justification; justification giving to the sinner the right of adoption, and regeneration putting him in the possession or enjoyment of this right. The certainty of one's adoption, and of the inheritance warranted by it, are counted among the attributes of the new birth. Pietism caused an approximation of the Lutheran theology to that of the Reformed Church, which, from the beginning, had distinguished more strictly between regeneration and adoption. The expressions of the Reformed theologians differed, however, greatly. Usually, they represented adoption as the effect or as the fruit of justification. Sometimes, however, as co-ordinate, but always as subsequent to regeneration. Rationalism threw aside the Biblical conception of adoption, as well as that of regeneration. Bretshneider explains it as the firm hope of a moral man for everlasting bliss after this life. Schleiermacher speaks of adoption as a constitutive element of justification, but explains it on the whole as identical with the putting on of a new man, and regards it as a phase in the phenomenology of the Christian consciousness. Lange ("Christliche Dogmatik") regards the new birth as the transformation of the individual life into a Divine human life, and finds it in the union of justification and faith. Adoption, as the result of the new birth, appears to him as a substantial relation with God, and an individualized image of God according to his image in Christ. Güder, in Herzog's "Real Encyklopädie," thinks that the words of the Bible conceal treasures which theological science has not yet fully succeeded in bringing to light; and that adoption must be brought into an organic connection, not only with justification, but with the new birth—the latter not to be taken merely in a psychological, but in a deeper mystical sense.—*Cyclopædia of Theological Literature.*

[13084] It is an act that does not first take place at believing; indeed the saints are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, openly and manifestatively (Gal. iii. 26); but then it is not faith that makes them children, but what makes them appear to be so; adoption is the act of God, and not of faith; it is God that says, "How shall I put them among the children?" and again, "I will be their Father, and they shall be My sons and daughters" (Jer. iii. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 18). It is the work and business of faith to receive the blessing of adoption, which it could not do, unless it had been previously provided in the mind and by the will of God, and in the covenant of His grace; for the reception of which Christ has made way by His redemption, one end of which is "that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 5), that is, by faith; for God has appointed faith to be the general receiver of Christ, and of all the blessings of grace through Him, and this among the rest; and to as many as receive Christ, He gives ἐξουσίαν, a power, authority, dignity, and privilege to become the sons of God openly; that is, to claim this as their privilege and dignity; which claim is made by faith, but not the thing itself claimed; even to them that believe on His name, and who are described as regenerate persons, which is an evidence of their sonship, though not the thing itself; "who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12, 13).—*John Gill, D.D.*

V. Its Instrumental Cause.

1 The Holy Incarnation.

[13085] The instrumental cause of adoption in the Scriptural sense is the incarnation of our Lord, by which human nature was so sanctified as to be once more in the relation to God which is expressed in Luke iii. 28, where it is said of Adam, "which was the son of God." The human nature which our Lord took of His human mother was thus spoken of by the angel: "That Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke i. 35); and St. Paul shows that this relation of sonship thus acquired by the human nature of Christ possessed a capacity of extension: "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 4, 5).—*Rev. John Henry Blunt, M A.*

[13086] Adoption renders us heirs of God, with whom is no caprice nor partiality; and joint-heirs with Christ, whose gift the inheritance is, as being, by the Incarnation, the Head of the Church.—*C. N.*

[13087] O Holiest Brotherhood!
I could not stand, as now, a child of God,
Had'st Thou not walked this earth—the Child of Man!—*A. M. A. W.*

VI. Its "Outward and Visible Sign."

1 Holy baptism.

[13088] This capacity of Christ's Sonship was not at once extended to all by the act of its acquisition in His own individual person. His incarnation became the instrumental cause of adoption; but the formal act by which each individual person is adopted as a child of God is the act of baptism, in which they receive "the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. viii. 15). "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 26, 27). . . . It must be remembered that adoption is wholly the work of God. No act of man's own could make him a son of God; but whosoever is baptized, being made a member of Christ by God's blessing following on the means used, they thus "put on Christ," and in their union with Him are adopted into the sonship of God.—*Rev. John Henry Blunt, M.A.*

VII. Its Obligations.

[13089] If God be our Father, His children should manifest the spirit of (1) *Trust*—faith in His gracious character, word, and Providence. Do not children rely on their father for all they need? Let God's children trust their loving Father (Matt. vi. 11). His knowledge, care, power, &c. (2) *Reverence* (Mal. i. 6), the fear to offend, the desire to please, the holy jealousy for His honour. (3) *Submission* to whatever His wisdom may appoint, and His law may require (John xviii. 11; Heb. xii. 9). (4) *Obedience* (1 Pet. i. 14), whether His command be painful or pleasing, whether for doing or for suffering, for mortifying sin or for following after holiness.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13090] To be a child of God through Christ is to have attained the highest (moral) perfection, and the greatest degree of holiness of which human nature is susceptible. . . . "But wisdom is justified of her children," *i.e.*, those whom Christ recognizes as His prove by *words* and *deeds* that they are the children of wisdom. —*Krehl.*

[13091] When a child of God is put upon temptation his heart recoils, and reasons thus: "How can I do this wickedness and sin against God?" I dare not, my Father hath forbidden me. There is an awe of his heavenly Father upon him (1 Pet. i. 17).—*T. Manton, D.D.*, 1620–1677.

[13092] There are two ways whereby we may know fire to be real fire, and that differences real fire from painted fire, or from imaginary fire: the first is by the heat of it, the other is by the flame of it. Now though sometimes it so falls out that the fire do not flame, yet at that very time you may know it to be real fire by the heat it gives. So there are two ways of knowing our adoption: the first is by the spirit of adoption, crying Abba Father! in our hearts (Gal. iv. 6); and the other is by our sanctification and holiness (Rom. viii. 16). Now, though sometimes it may fall out that the flame, the witness of the spirit of adoption, may be wanting, yet the heat of sanctification and holiness remains, and we may have recourse to this fire and warm our hearts at it, and sit down satisfied and assured of our adoption; for as fire may be known to be fire by its heat, though it want a flame; so, though its spirit of adoption do not witness our adoption to us, yet we may know our adoption by our real sanctification and holiness.—*T. Brooks*, 1608–1680.

[13093] Adoption is evidenced by the renunciation of all former dependencies. When a child is adopted he relinquishes the object of his past confidence and submits himself to the will and pleasure of the adopter; so they who are brought into the family of God will evidence it by giving up every other object, so far as it interferes with the will and glory of their heavenly Father. "Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?" (Hos. xiv. 8). "Other lords have had dominion over us; but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name" (Isa. xxvi. 13; Matt. xiii. 45, 46; Phil. iii. 8).—*Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge.*

VIII. Its Privileges.

[13094] The privileges of adoption are: (1) A new and endearing relationship, "children of God," "sons of God," "heirs of God," and joint-heirs with Christ (1 John iii. 1; John i. 12; Eph. ii. 5; Rom. viii. 17). (2) A new and sanctified nature, the spirit of sonship, a filial nature in place of the spirit of enmity against God. (3) A sure and certain standing in God's family—the standing of oneness with Christ in His righteousness and Sonship. (4) The right of access to God, as a most gracious Father, to expect from Him all that an infinitely wise and loving Father will bestow. (5) A title to the whole inheritance of covenant blessings promised to God's children; of things temporal and spiritual for this world and for the world to come.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13095] To this state of adoption belong freedom from a servile spirit, for we are not servants, but sons, the special love and care of God our heavenly Father; . . . and the spirit of adoption, or the witness of the Holy Spirit to our adoption, which is the foundation of all

the comfort we can derive from those privileges. . . . The last-mentioned great privilege of adoption merits special attention. It consists in the inward witness or testimony of the Holy Spirit to the sonship of believers, from which flows a comfortable persuasion or conviction of our present acceptance with God, and the hope of our future and eternal glory.

[13096] A rich man may adopt into his family a poor beggar-boy picked up off the streets. He may have him washed, and dressed, and educated, and may permit him to call him father, and leave him all his property; but there is one thing he cannot do—he cannot give him his nature, he cannot impart to him his own likeness. But when God adopts us into His family through Jesus, He makes us partakers of His own nature, and impresses us with His image. Men take notice that we have been with Jesus. The spirit and the temper of the Holy One shines out, somewhat imperfectly, no doubt, but still so as to show the Divine relationship that has been formed.—*Rev. R. Boyd.*

[13097] We are assured thereby that God careth for us, and watcheth over us, and delighteth to do us good; for, being our Father, we may assure ourselves we shall find Him a Father even most tenderly and most fatherly affected to do us good. So that as a father is carking and caring for his children when his children are fast asleep, so God cares more for us than we care for ourselves, and many times thinks of our good when we ourselves are careless of it (Deut. viii. 5; 1 Pet. v. 7).—*J. Smith*, 1629.

[13098] "To be called the sons of God!" says a grand old author, "this is our prerogative royal. We will tell you not of a kindred imperial, adopted into some of the Cæsars' families; nor of David watching into the house of Saul, which seemed to him no small preferment; we blazon not your arms with the mixture of noble impressions, nor fetch your lineal descents from heroes and monarchs. You are made the sons and daughters of God: this is honour amply sufficient."

IX. Homiletical Applications.

[13099] Wonderful is such an act of grace, if we consider (1) The Persons adopting. (2) The beings adopted. (3) The price at which our adoption is procured.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13100] It is most important to remember the distinction between the state of adoption and the spirit of adoption. As an act of God's free grace, adoption is complete at once, and equal in all the adopted; but the realization and enjoyment may differ greatly, even in the same persons, at different times. The believer's security depends upon his standing, not upon the realization of his state—our standing remains the same, whatever our frames and feelings may be.—*Ibid.*

PART IV.

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION C .(*Continued.*)

[3] Forgiveness of Sins.

SYLLABUS.

		PAGE
I.	Nature of the Divine Pardon	454
II.	Its Prerogative	454
III.	Its Distinctions	454
IV.	The Figure used by Our Lord to Convey this Doctrine	455
V.	Symbolic Illustrations of the Divine Process on the Soul made use of in Holy Scripture	455
VI.	The Grand Import of this Doctrine to the Church of God	456
VII.	The Solemn Warning involved in the Consideration of that one and only Sin to which the Doctrine of Forgiveness does not apply	457
VIII.	The Two Great Lines of Thought as to the Final Restoration of the Unforgiven	457
IX.	Negations implied in a Reverent Meditation on the Doctrine	458
X.	Cautions to be observed in the Contemplation of Divine Forgiveness	459
XI.	Homiletical Remarks and Applications	460

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION C. (*Continued.*)

3

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

I. Nature of the Divine Pardon.

[13101] Forgiveness of sin is that act of God's free grace by which, in virtue of the merits of Christ's atonement, appropriated by faith, He frees the sinner, who accepts Christ by such faith, from the guilt and penalty of his sins. . . . The sinner is forgiven freely, as a free gift, not of right, not meritoriously, and not of desert.—*Farrar.*

[13102] Pardon is the act of forgiving an offender, or removing the guilt of sin, that the punishment due to it may not be inflicted. Of the nature of pardon it may be observed that the Scripture represents it by various phrases: a lifting up or taking away sin (Psa. xxxii. 1), a covering of it (Psa. lxxxv. 2), a non-imputation of it (Psa. xxxii. 2), a blotting it out (Psa. xliii. 25); it is an act of free grace (Psa. li. 1), a point of justice, God having received satisfaction by the blood of Christ (1 John i. 9), a complete act, a forgiveness of all the sins of His people (1 John i. 7; Psa. ciii. 2, 3).—*Encyclopædia.*

II. Its Prerogative.

1 "Who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark ii. 7.)

[13103] Pardon is God's prerogative, one of the flowers in His royal crown, Dan. ix. 9; Mark ii. 7; from the fruit of His mercy, Exod. xxxiv. 7; His compassion, Micah vii. 18, 19; His grace, Rom. v. 15, 16; His goodness, Psa. lxxxvi. 5; His forbearance, Rom. iii. 25; His justice and faithfulness, 1 John i. 9.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13104] The Author, or cause of pardon, is not any creature, angel, or man, but God alone. . . . There is nothing that man has, or can do, by which pardon can be procured. . . . It is the prerogative of God alone to forgive; . . . the first cause of which is His own sovereign grace and mercy; . . . the meritorious cause of which is the blood of Christ.—*Encyclopædia.*

[13105] None can pardon sins but only God (St. Chrysostom). None can truly pardon sins but He alone who beholds the thoughts of men (Euthymius). Thou who alone sparest, who alone forgivest sins (St. Gregory). For this cannot be common to any man with Christ to forgive sins. This is His gift only who took away the sins of the world (St. Ambrose).

[13106] There is a double forgiveness of sin—in heaven and in a man's own conscience; and therefore sometimes compared to the blotting out of something out of a book, sometimes to the blotting out of a cloud. To the blotting out of a book (Isa. xliii. 25), that it may be no more remembered or charged upon us. To the blotting out of a cloud (Isa. xliv. 22), as the sun when it breaketh forth in its strength dispelleth the mists and clouds. Sin interposeth as a cloud, hindering the light of God's countenance from shining forth upon us. Both these are God's work—to blot the book and to blot out the cloud.—*T. Manton, D.D.*

[13107] Sin against God can only be forgiven by God, on the condition He prescribes, of repentance, and of this no man can infallibly judge.

III. Its Distinctions.

1 From justification.

[13108] Pardon of sin and justification are considered by some as the same thing; and it must be confessed that there is a close connection; in many parts they agree, and it is without doubt that every sinner who shall be found pardoned at the great day, will likewise be justified; yet they have been distinguished thus. An innocent person, when falsely accused and acquitted, is justified but not pardoned; and a criminal may be pardoned, though he cannot be justified, or declared innocent. Pardon is of men that are sinners, and who remain such though pardoned sinners; but justification is a pronouncing persons righteous as if they had never sinned. Pardon frees from punishment, but does not entitle to everlasting life; but justification does. If we were only pardoned,

we should, indeed, escape the pains of hell, but could have no claim to the joys of heaven; for these are more than the most perfect works of man could merit; therefore they must be what the Scripture declares "the gift of God."

[13109] Pardon is sometimes confounded with justification. But the two, though never separate in the plan of salvation, are yet distinct. Pardon is the putting away of the guilt of sin. Justification is this and more; the acceptance also of the forgiven sinner. Pardon absolves from punishment; justification entitles to eternal life. Pardon is an act frequently repeated; justification can take place but once. Pardon concerns the believer's works; justification concerns his person.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13110] Justification is not simply forgiveness; the term justification when applied to a guilty person, do not import his being morally just, but just with respect to law and the lawgiver; that is, placed in the position of a person who has not broken the law, both in respect to exemption from punishment, and the favour and kindness of the judge. Justification is pardon administered consistently with the requirements of justice and law.—*Farrar.*

2 From regeneration.

[13111] It is one thing to receive the Divine pardon, it is another to recover the Divine image. The first is the initial grace granted to the penitent sinner, the second is the glory of the perfected saint. That in the Divine order the forgiveness of sin, when sin is first confessed and forsaken, is always associated with the new birth in which the life of God is given to man, the life which is ultimately revealed in the consummate energy and beauty of moral and spiritual character, is not only true; it is so true that their inseparable association as the two great elements of the Christian redemption has been asserted, in varying forms indeed, but with unbroken unanimity and with strenuous earnestness, by the theologians and preachers of every Church, of every country, and of every age. They always go together; but they *go together*, and they are not the same.—*R. W. Dale, D.D.*

IV. The Figure used by Our Lord to Convey this Doctrine.

1 "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit" (John xiii. 10).

[13112] The three words in our English version are represented by only two in the original, both of them adjectives. The exact rendering is "clean all of him." The illustration is, beyond doubt, borrowed from the use of the bath. One who has just bathed, and goes straight home, will not, on returning there, need to be bathed again, for his body just cleansed has not yet had time to contract fresh soils. With one exception—The feet, left partially unprotected by the open sandals, from dust or mire on the walk home, may need a fresh cleansing. But this is all. The rest of the body is clean. Thus, by a rapid and easy transition from the material and visible into the spiritual and invisible world, Christ used the figure of the cleansing of the body in the water of the bath, for an illustration of the cleansing of the soul through Divine grace; a cleansing which, whatever its method, and its conditions, and its instruments, has at least two essential features stamped on it by Christ—it is supernatural, and the very work of God Himself. It is also complete.—*Dr. Anthony Thorold, Bishop of Rochester.*

[13113] Do you ask what it is we mean when we speak of spiritual defilement? and in what intelligible sense can such defilement be said to be washed from the spirit of man? For it is plain that the spiritual essence we so dimly apprehend and imperfectly describe as the word "soul" cannot be reached or affected by material processes in the application of sensible things. That spirit can be soiled at all is but the application to one sort of existence of a fact or condition belonging to another and widely differing from it. Consequently, it is essential that we should penetrate through the shell of the figure to the spiritual truth beneath. —*Ibid.*

V. Symbolic Illustrations of the Divine Process on the Soul made use of in Holy Scripture.

1 The symbols themselves.

[13114] Holy Scripture uses three distinct figures as illustrations of that Divine process on the soul which the Apostles' Creed defines as the "forgiveness of sins," and which our Lord describes as being "clean every whit." They are the Water, the Blood, and the Word. Water, as we read in the prophet Ezekiel, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean. From all your filthiness and from all your idols I will cleanse you." Again, in the Acts of the Apostles, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Blood, of the use of which one instance may suffice. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The Word: in our Lord's own use of it in this same thirteenth chapter, "Now ye are clean through the Word, which I have spoken unto you." One instance more which gives a remarkable combination of two of these figures with reference to the Church, "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word."—*Ibid.*

2 The truths embodied in the symbols.

[13115] Of what truths are these figures the symbols? Water is the symbol of the supernatural operation of God the Holy Ghost in the regeneration and sanctification of the soul, whereby are conveyed and applied the forces of Divine Grace to the soul of man. "According

to His mercy He hath saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." This is St. Paul's figure. Blood is the symbol of that atoning sacrifice, whereby is declared unto us, at once, man's sin with its consequent ruin and helplessness, and that unspeakable, unfathomable mystery of grace, wherein God's holiness and pity came together into one redeeming concord, and righteousness and peace kissed each other on the Cross. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Again, St. Paul. Word symbolizes the method of communicating this to man's understanding. For hereby, through the conveying of the facts and truths, and ideas, and promises of the gospel to the heart and conscience through the reason, in words written or spoken, his spirit is seized, touched, stirred, broken, and healed. "Preaching peace by Jesus Christ," this is St. Peter's account. In a word, the Blood is the exhibition and operation of a Divine redemption; the Word is the vehicle of that wondrous gospel to the intelligence of mankind; the Water is the visible sign and instrument by which that message is applied and assured. The end of it is that Christ having died and risen again, and the Spirit having been given as the Father's promise to men, accompanying and vitalizing the gospel of a full and free and present salvation to them that are afar off, and also to them that are nigh, they who perceive their own necessity, and know and believe God's great love to them, cast themselves at the feet of Christ the Redeemer, and are made "clean every whit."—*Ibid.*

3 Their doctrinal significance.

[13116] Thoughtful divines have constantly recognized in the incident of the Paschal Supper (John xiii. 3–17) and the teaching that goes with it, a close connection not only with Holy Baptism, but with the entire economy of grace in the continual cleansing of the imperfect but faithful soul. If there is no such thing as spiritual cleansing in baptism, Ananias's direction to Saul has no meaning, and it becomes an empty and disappointing formalism. Surely, to the faithful recipient of that Divine ordinance a free forgiveness is assured. "One baptism for the remission of sins" is the expression of the Catholic faith; and while the baptism cannot be repeated, that primal forgiveness is pledge and firstfruits of pardon renewed, and bestowed as frailty requires and repentance prepares. In Holy Communion, while we ask "So to eat the flesh of Jesus Christ and to drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood," we can plead it as our ground of access, make it a sacrifice of thanksgiving, only when it is first a season of penitence. Claiming our privilege as children, we will always remember that the possibilities of the prodigal are deep within our souls; called to be saints, let us ask for the power of the resurrection continually to deliver us from the bondage of indwelling sin. Perhaps we none of us know what we miss through lack of explicit and detailed and honest and sorrowful confession of sin. Yet to the English Churchman the service of Holy Communion, with its ample opportunities for private and close reflection, would bring much more solid and vivid comfort, if there were less desultoriness and more effort for detailed prayer. —*Ibid.*

VI. The Grand Import of this Doctrine to the Church of God.

[13117] Forgiveness of sin means four infinitely blessed and life-giving truths for the Church of God. First, the full free, present, unreserved forgiveness of sins, to every penitent and believing soul approaching God by Christ, and, presenting in an act of faith, His merits and sacrifice as the one ground of propitiation and mercy, whereby His holy grief and displeasure are put away, the plagues and penalties of it remitted, the veil that shut out His face taken away, and constant access opened into His presence. Loved before, or why should it have been redeemed, now the soul is doubly loved; and in the grand hyperbole of the Psalmist, "As far as the east is from the west, so far shall He remove our transgressions from us."—*Ibid.*

[13118] With pardon goes righteousness. You cannot really separate one from the other, either in the purpose of God's mercy or in the method of it. So much so, that when St. Paul writes about it to the Romans he not only includes the one in the other, but practically identifies them as two halves of one whole. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin," which means, only diversely expressed, that to whom He does not impute sin, forgiving him, He does impute righteousness, justifying him. One act does both, and one love bestows both. To be forgiven is the same thing as to be accounted righteous before God. For, clearly, it is either both or neither. It is either the prodigal crouching in the outside darkness, or the accepted child standing before the Father in Christ, His representative and head.—*Ibid.*

[13119] With pardon for sin and the Divine righteousness going with it is the pledge of continuous grace, assured protection, and final victory. God is ever consistent in His purpose, which is to overcome sin in us; and righteous in His character, which never claims anything that we are not reasonably able to perform. Christ died for our sins that we might die unto them. Therefore, we are told to reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Be sure

that whatever we need for holiness and victory God has for us—in Christ—only we are to ask for it. "The river of God is full of water."—*Ibid.*

VII. The Solemn Warning involved in the Consideration of that one and only Sin to which the Doctrine of Forgiveness does not apply.

[13120] There is one thought, an awful one, for it involves terrible issues, yet so much in front among the controversies of the time that one who presumes to write about forgiveness could hardly pass it over without, at least, one word to counsel, though not to explain. A disciple was present at the Paschal Supper, of whom it was said by One who knows, "Good were it for that man if he had never been born." Truly awful words. Of a certain sin, that against the Holy Ghost, the same gentle, holy Saviour warned His hearers that it hath no forgiveness, not in this world, nor in the world to come. Again, the apostle of love, St. John, in his general epistle carefully distinguishes between sins about which we may pray, and a sin "unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it."—*Ibid.*

[See Section XIV., "Sins."]

VIII. The Two Great Lines of Thought as to the Final Restoration of the Unforgiven.

[13121] The two chief lines of thought on this question . . . are each nobly jealous for the character of God, and yearning for the salvation of man. One of them feels outraged by the supposed injustice to His mercy in the prospect of a hopeless exile from His face and service for those who pass away in impenitence. The other is so profoundly impressed by the unspeakable, inconceivable evil and consequences of sin in the universe, and its detestableness before Almighty God, that even to try to open a door of mercy which seems closed may mean to make light of what God abhors. Both, however, readily admit the extreme peril of going one hair's breadth beyond the Saviour's own utterances on this matter; also the unconscious yet real presumptuousness of attempting to protect God's character from His own revelation of it, or to make human mercy and human righteousness more merciful and more righteous than His.—*Ibid.*

[13122] There can be no doubt that Holy Scripture, from the tender lips of the Saviour, contains awful warnings about the final condition of the wicked, which it is a sort of impiety to explain away, and a grave irreverence to suppose to have been uttered merely to frighten us. When He who so loved Jerusalem, that He died for it, wept over it because He could not save it, were those dramatic tears? "Doubtless God has so surprised us by His former acts of grace, by such an inconceivable interposition in the Incarnation and the Cross, that it does not become us to say that anything is impossible with Him, except to deny Himself. But still less does it become us, creatures such as we are, who know so little, whose hearts and minds are so feebly under control, whose wills are so treacherous, whose passions are so blinding, either to narrow or enlarge His words. If, indeed, He has told us of more than we supposed His words to mean, in God's name let it be shown. If not, let us take care what we are doing. We may be claiming to be wiser than the wisest, more loving than the most loving, who even on earth partially lifted the veil from the unseen world, and in parable and vision disclosed its awful secrets."—*Ibid.*

[13123] Silence for those who dare not add to a book which, in their judgment, at this page has been deliberately closed, trust from those whose personal experience of God's love and righteousness make them infinitely and immovably sure that God will in the end justify Himself as merciful and true before the entire universe, diligence unwearied and tender, from all who love God and hate sin, and wish to make their brethren's risks as little as they can, by doing their best both to bring them unto light and love—here seems to me to be the true and humble wisdom of the servants of God. To preach the gospel of One who is mighty to save, and who to the last, though in vain, tried to save even Judas, with unfaltering boldness to proclaim the sinfulness of sin, and its awful unknown reward, here and hereafter, is our twofold and solemn duty. Here also to leave it with Him who is both Saviour and Judge. The gospel of mercy to tender and gentle hearts will ever be a more congenial theme; but the gospel of holiness is at least as needful. Only in the concord of the Divine perfections, only in the full and unflinching declaration of a full-orbed doctrine, is the secret of a right judgment to be found.—*Ibid.*

[13124] "Discourses about the restoration of all things are about something that we have not the least knowledge of, nor any faculties or foundation for such knowledge; we have nothing certain or plain within ourselves about it, and so have nothing to oppose to anything that is told us. The irrecoverable state of men and angels is a dreadful thought to us; our sense of misery, tenderness, and compassion for our fellow-creatures makes us wish that no creatures should fall into it, and we are unable to show how such a state should result from the infinite wisdom, goodness, and perfection of God. But then we must consider that we are here governed by our passions and weakness, and only form a God according to our own conceptions. For my own part, this one saying, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' is a stronger support to my mind, and a better guard against all anxiety than the deepest discoveries that the most speculative, inquisitive minds could help me to. With this one assurance of the infinitely infinite goodness of God, I resign up myself, my

friends, relatives, men, and angels to the adorable yet incomprehensible disposal of His wisdom."

IX. Negations implied in a Reverent Meditation on the Doctrine.

1 Forgiveness does not mean that the moral and physical consequences of sin, as far as this life is concerned, can ever be remitted or repealed.

[13125] As much in the moral government of God as in the majestic order of nature there is an inexorable reign of law. It is as true for a saint as for a reprobate, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." While it is true that the drunkard may be utterly delivered out of his cups, and the demon of strong drink cast out of him, yet the tissues, both of body and mind, until he drops into his grave, must be marked by the excesses of the past. Fifty years of abstinence in front can only prevent future mischief; they cannot drain out of his system one drop of what has been already swallowed. That the past is irrevocable is a law for all men in everything and everywhere. We must consent meekly to bow to this absolute rule of righteousness. We must recognize and accept in it the merciful severity which, to prevent sin, deliberately makes its results evident and abiding, which will never try to avert evil and assist goodness by making evil as sweet as goodness.—*Ibid.*

2 Forgiveness does not imply that because sin has been forgiven and put away, it will never tempt us again.

[13126] In our regeneration sin may have received a deadly wound, but being hard to kill it still lives on, and, unless we take care, may soon lift up its head and be too much for us again. Its forms, no doubt, will be varied and modified by our years, for self-love has a thousand developments. The old man's temptations are not the boy's. A man in middle life is tempted by trials of his own. But it is the same mischief under a new dress. Till we die "the motions of sins in our members" will ever be tempting us to be false to Christ; nay, occasionally it almost seems that those who most wish to be like Christ are those who are most with Him in the severity of His temptations, and that the disciples whom He most dearly loves, honourably uses, continuously sanctifies, are those whom the tempter is permitted (as with Job of old) to harass with the most grievous and poignant temptations. Sometimes, as the Psalmist crying up to God from the revealed depths of a heart which makes them loathe themselves, they call aloud to God, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?"—*Ibid.*

[13127] Repentance being of a slight and superficial character is often the cause why old evil habits and practices break out with such disastrous consequences in the after life. Evil habits are like "dormant buds," and are liable at any moment to burst out with rank profusion when conditions unhappily favourable present themselves. Much of the extravagant and erroneous teaching which mars revival movements arise from a defective view of the indestructible nature in this life of the germs of sin even in the regenerate.—*C. N.*

3 Forgiveness does not of necessity involve that sin forgiven is sin forgotten, either by God, by man, or by ourselves.

[13128] We may be quite sure that David's sin about Uriah was never forgotten either by his enemies or by himself, until the rest of the grave had soothed him into forgetfulness. St. Peter never forgot that he had denied his Lord. Had he forgotten it, there would have been many ready to give the set on of memory a pull. This, too, bitter and humbling as it may be, is also wholesome and sobering, operating by the force of law through the action of memory, and the power of mental association, sometimes, too, through the cruelty of unrelenting hearts. Yet it is no proof whatever that we are neither forgiven nor loved. What it does show is that there must be some fresh lesson for us to learn of humility or watchfulness; more tenderness to acquire in dealing with the infirmities of tempted brethren, more sympathy to manifest in helping them to bear their burdens up the steep Hill Difficulty to the house where Evangelist discourses on the gospel of grace. Once more, and oh, that this awful truth could be written as with the point of a diamond in our hearts; it never can be quite the same thing, no, not even in eternity, to have sinned as not to have sinned; however profound the repentance, complete the conversion, devoted the service, edifying the life. A blameless past must always be better than a stained one. It is blessed to repent and to be forgiven; but blesseder, oh, far blesseder, is it never to have left our Father's house at all, and to have kept ourselves in a pure youth and an upright manhood. Every one and everything is worse for sin. For sin goes on scattering its contagions and harvesting its results long after it has been confessed, forsaken, and forgiven, nay, long after he who has sinned has joined the white-robed throng. To some, this thought of the terrible and, in a sense, unending vitality of sin would be almost intolerable, if they could not somehow leave it with Him who, in forgiving, knows what He has forgiven, and has other ways, we trust, of preventing and healing, and finally overcoming evil, than He has been pleased to reveal.

[13129] What I would press is that not for one moment is the thought to be tolerated, that because Christ has died for us, and God is reconciling us to Himself in Him, therefore a little sin, more or less, is of small consequence. If only for five minutes we could contemplate the anguish of a lost soul over unforgiven sin, could feel the gloom of the outer darkness settling down on an unhappy spirit banished

from the King's marriage feast, we should better understand how to loathe and resist it now.—*Dr. Anthony Thorold, Bishop of Rochester.*

X. Cautions to be observed in the Contemplation of Divine Forgiveness.

1 As regards the discrepancies and dangers of modern unbelief, and the occasional laxity in statement of the opposite extremity of religious speculation.

[13130] Modern unbelief boldly and emphatically maintains that forgiveness of sins is at once impossible with God and destructive for man. Impossible for God! since, if He is consistent with Himself in all His operations and dealings with us, the same God (as Bishop Butler presses in his great argument) in the kingdom of grace that is in the world of nature, He will act in the one as He acts in the other, and be careful not to contradict Himself. But it is certain that He never permits or forgives the slightest violation of physical order. Every breach of nature's laws has its inevitable recompense and reward. Equally certain, then, must it be that He never can, never ought to condone any offence against the moral law. As for man, it is positively injurious to him, because essentially subversive of all authority without, and of all moral sense within, to suffer him to suppose that if he sins he can be treated in any other way than that of personally suffering all the consequences. Nay, at all times this notion of a free and gratuitous pardon is alleged to have been the fruitful source of moral disorder, in encouraging men to suppose that they can sin with impunity; and with equal eagerness is repudiated the notion that even the deepest and truest repentance can be any just claim with God that the law should not take its course. At quite the other extreme we occasionally find a perilous looseness of statement as to the facility of pardon, and, consequently, by no remote inference of the comparative importance of sin. The Divine readiness to forgive may, it is obvious, be pressed in such serious disproportion to other equally true and solemn verities about the guilt of sin and the true meaning of sincere repentance, that it may come even to represent God as winking at it, through the freeness and gloriousness of the remedy that manifests His redeeming love to sinners. The parable of the prodigal son is almost the most precious exposition in all the Bible of the heart of the Father towards mankind. But it is possible so to depict the welcome of the penitent, and the eager readiness of his father to forgive and forget his guilt, as to tempt the feeling that no slight injustice was done to the elder brother, who was ever with him sharing his home and his love.—*Ibid.*

[13131] Sin affects not only man himself, but his relationship with his fellow-man, and, worse still, with God. Though hating sin, God still loved, and always loved, the world of man; for He Himself purposed from all eternity to give His only-begotten Son as the Saviour of the human family. God could not consistently with His own personal holiness and His other infinite perfections, and also with the claims that lie upon Him as King of kings and Lord of lords, have loved man unless the scheme of propitiation had been devised. But as God loved the world, He removed all hindrances out of the way of possessing and manifesting His love by sending His Son to die, "the Just for the unjust." It was only in view of Christ's coming redemptive work that in former times God could pass by sins and in any degree be merciful and favourable; and it is *only* in consideration of Christ's completed redemptive work that God, as a just and holy God, and viewed in regard to Himself as Ruler of the moral universe, is enabled to pardon and to be propitious—ready, willing, and eager to forgive, to justify, and to glorify.—*C. N.*

[13132] There is an immature peace which is not generated by a true repentance. There is an insecure peace which does not spring from the favour of God. The false assurance rests on something within us. The true on some one without and above us. The assurance of my own feeling may be the heated creation of a deluded fancy. The assurance of faith rests as on a rock upon the Person and Word of God. Christ has died for me, and risen again. He invites me to come to Him, to rest on Him, to believe His love, to accept His salvation, to receive His grace, to bear His yoke. I will believe His love, on the authority of His Word, far above what I can either ask or think. I accept the salvation which the voice of His quickening Spirit has made a supreme necessity to my conscience, and, by methods chosen by Himself, has brought home to my heart. I receive His grace through the channels He has ordained for it, themselves important witnesses of His life and purpose—the Word and Sacraments; careful not to measure it by my own unaccountable and uncontrollable feelings at the moment, but by His own promise to be present with His ordinances. I accept His yoke, perhaps not too cheerfully at first. Yet the more readily I carry it, the more He blesses me, and the wider the freedom that I feel. As to its verification, what is the tenor of my life and the main direction of my will? The play of my feelings may vary as the clouds on the mountain side, or the hues of the tossing sea, and the fault be none of mine. But if my will be true, that is all that really matters. Disturbance there may be, perhaps there must be, sometimes as the trial of our faith, sometimes as the recognition of faithful endurance, sometimes, let it be confessed, from slacked devotion, grave inconsistency, indulged infirmity. Then it is God's kind and holy frown. Perhaps the soul that has always the same amount of assurance about God, and of communion with Him, may have reason to doubt the soundness of the one, and even the existence of the other.—*Dr. Anthony Thorold, Bishop of Rochester.*

[13133] The world will not believe a man repents,
And this wise world of ours is mainly right;
Full seldom doth a man repent or use
Both grace and will to pick the vicious quitch
Of blood and custom wholly out of him,
An I make all clean, and plant himself afresh.

XI. Homiletical Remarks and Applications.

[13134] Pardon is a Divine act, which never stands alone. Whenever pardon is really given, there is always a sense of sin, and a sense of mortification of sin also. Too many persons pray for pardon as a kind of general duty, without at all weighing the evil of sin, or having a real desire to resist the same sin the next time they are tempted to it.

It is the glory of God's pardons that they are so bestowed, that the act of pardon involves the most powerful motive not to do wrong again. Coming from the cross of Christ, as far as possible, sin is made most repulsive, in that it slew the Son of God. And thus the motive is put afresh into the heart, of fresh love by Him to whom we owe so much.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13135] Pardon, acceptance, victory, imply and include our usefulness. Observe this in the case of St. Peter. Even before he denied his Lord, it was laid on him by anticipation. "When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." This is just what happened. After the resurrection, as they walked together by the sea of Galilee, Jesus asked him, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Feed My lambs; feed My sheep." He did feed them. Does any one wish to know if he is forgiven? It is neither a foolish wish nor a presumptuous one. Let him ask himself not only if God is using him, but also if he is willing to be used. The Master of the house is not so rich in faithful witnesses that He can afford to dispense with one of them. If the joy of the Divine forgiveness has really touched the quick of our heart, it will be quite impossible for us to be idle.—*Dr. Anthony Thorold, Bishop of Rochester.*

[13136] Faith's discovery of forgiveness in God, though it have no present sense of its own peculiar interest therein, is the great supportment of a sin-perplexed soul (Psa. cxxx. 4).—*Dr. Owen.*

[13137] . . . Alas! alas,
Why, all the souls that were, were forfeit once;
And he that might the vantage best have took,
Found out the remedy. How would you be,
If He, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are? Oh! think on that!

[13138] Is any reader sore and wounded by the thought of past unworthiness; whose reason tells him, that even God cannot make it as though i had not been, but that nothing can be done now to repair or diminish what has been written down in the Books that are to be opened? Be humble and gentle, be charitable and forbearing, even considering, when others fall, your own past need of mercy, and how great a forgiveness God has bestowed on you. But also be bright and fearless, manful and strong. If you can humbly look up in your Saviour's face, because, on your confession and repentance, He has cast your sins behind His back, surely you may look your neighbour in the face. If God for Christ's sake has consented to forgive you, surely your brother may. If not—"if God be for us—who can be against us?" You are not alone in your sinful history, nor in your past experience. Thousands and thousands share it with you, of whom the Church and the world dream not. In the great multitude which no man can number, plucked as brands from the burning, everlasting monuments of infinite grace will be David and the Magdalen, the great Augustine, and the author of the "Pilgrim's Progress," and a host of purified souls, that deeply sinned, and passionately repented, whose early transgressions have been equitably and generously forgotten in the grand usefulness of their after-lives and the sweet fragrance of their sanctity.

The more you have been forgiven, so much the more thereby you know of God's patience and compassion, so much greater the burden laid on you of confessing about it to others. As to your heaven, be sure of this, that whatever your present sadness, or still unhealed remorse, when once the welcome flashes on you from the face of the Lamb that was slain, there will be perfect soundness, and cleanness in the presence of us all. As you look into your heart and feel no sin there, as you wonder at the whiteness of your robe, and find no stain there, the sentence will steal into your heart and heal it for ever, "clean every whit."—*Dr. Anthony Thorold, Bishop of Rochester.*

[13139] Wherein the blessedness of forgiveness doth appear. 1. God doth pronounce the forgiven blessed. 2. Because they are delivered from the greatest evil. 3. Because they are taken into covenant with God—into God's favour—God's family—under God's providence; they have free access to God in prayer; they have communion with God in all His ordinances. 4. They are in a better state than Adam was in his first creation. 5. Because they shall be blessed: (1) The future blessedness which the pardoned shall have in the blessed and glorious place where they shall live, in the blessed and glorious company which they shall converse with—saints, angels, the Holy Ghost, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Father. In the blessed and glorious state they shall attain to a state of peace, of wealth and pleasure, of honour and dignity, of holiness and purity, of perfect happiness and glory in soul and body. (2) Prove that pardoned persons shall assuredly attain this future blessedness from God's election, God's promise.—*Thomas Vincent*, 1662.

PART IV.

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION C. (*Continued.*)

[4] Bestowal of Grace.

SYLLABUS.

		PAGE
I.	General Definition and Primary Significance of Divine Grace	462
II.	Its Embracements and Analysis...	462
III.	Its Properties...	463
IV.	Its Process	464
V.	Its Blessedness and Influence	464
VI.	Its Evidence and Witness	465
VII.	Its Abuse	465
VIII.	Distinction between True Grace and its Counterfeit...	466
IX.	Distinction between Restraining Grace and Renewing Grace	466
X.	Questions raised on the Subject	467
XI.	Homiletical Applications...	469

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION C. (*Continued.*)

4

BESTOWAL OF GRACE.

I. General Definition and Primary Significance of Divine Grace.

[13140] Grace is the free favour of God by which He has in Christ provided a way of salvation, and enabled man in Christ to embrace that way. . . . It is a supernatural gift of God to man, given for supernatural purposes, and bestowed freely for the sake of Christ's merits, including all supernatural powers and abilities by which the work of Christ is carried on in the Church and in the heart of man, and comprehending within the sphere of its operation all the powers and affections of man.—*Rev. John Henry Blunt, M.A.*

[13141] As the word mercy in its primary signification has relation to some creature either actually in a suffering state or obnoxious to it, so grace, in its proper and strict sense, always presupposes unworthiness in its object. Hence, whenever anything valuable is communicated by the blessed God, it cannot be of grace any further than the person on whom it is conferred is considered as unworthy. For, so far as any degree of worth appears, the province of grace ceases, and that of equity takes place. . . . When the Word of God represents the capital blessings of salvation as flowing from Divine grace, it describes the persons on whom they are bestowed, not only as having no claim to those benefits, but as deserving quite the reverse ; as having incurred a tremendous curse, and as justly exposed to eternal ruin (Rom. iii. 19, 23 ; Gal. iii. 10). . . . Grace is, therefore, . . . the favour of God manifested in the vouchsafement of spiritual and eternal blessings to the guilty and unworthy through our Lord Jesus Christ. Such is the eternal origin, such the glorious basis of our salvation! Hence it proceeds and is carried on to perfection. Grace shines through the whole. For, as an elegant writer observes, it is "not like a fringe of gold bordering the garment, not like an embroidery of gold decorating the robe, but like the mercy-seat of the ancient tabernacle, which was gold, pure gold, all gold throughout."—*Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge.*

[13142] Grace is a comprehensive word with many meanings in Scripture, but all comprised in two things : (1) God's goodwill towards us ; (2) God's good work in us.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

II. Its Embracements and Analysis.

1 **The grace of God's undeserved favour.**

(1) *The well-spring of all good.*

[13143] Divine grace first includes that original goodness and favour by which God inclines to fallen man, with the consequent steps which in the counsels of God were necessary for man's salvation. God's first will is that all men shall be saved ; His second will, that this salvation shall be through His Son. Here is, therefore, the grace of the Father, His first love and the gift of His Son ; the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor ; and the grace of the Holy Spirit, through whose overshadowing the Son was conceived and born into the world.—*Rev. John Henry Blunt, M.A.*

[13144] St. Paul says, "By the grace of God I am what I am." He reserved no part to himself, as if this were his own, not God's. All which is good in me, all which I have or am of good, that I am, by the grace of God. He speaks of his very "I," himself, not of any gifts, graces, wisdom, knowledge of Divine things, inspirations, labours, love, zeal ; not of any one thing which God had given him ; not of the aggregate of all God's gifts, but his very self, around whom all these things hung, in whom they were, his very inward self, had become what it was, by the grace of God.—*Dr. Pusey.*

[13145] By grace we stand, by grace we persevere ;
Ourselves, our deeds, our holiest, highest deeds,
Unworthy aught ; grace worthy endless praise,
If we fly swift, obedient to His will,

He gives us wings to fly ; if we resist
Temptation, and ne'er fall, it is His shield
Omnipotent that wards it off ; if we,
With love unquenchable; before Him burn,
'Tis He that lights and keeps alive the flame.
—*Robert Pollok.*

[13146] There is grace in the origin and grace in the execution of the plan of substitutionary atonement ; and when the atonement has been made, there is grace in the bestowment, on account of it, of all the blessings, commencing with pardon, of everlasting salvation. Beginning, middle, and end, from eternity to eternity, all is grace. Christ Himself is God's unspeakable gift, and eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Grace provides the atonement, and grace, as free as ever, bestows its results !—*Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.*

2 The grace of outward instruction.

(1) *The appointed instruments of good.*

[13147] The term grace includes the revelation of the mystery of redemption, the declaring to man the Word of life. Christ, Himself the Word, was the first preacher of the Word. The Holy Spirit speaks by the prophets. And to the Church of God is committed by the Son, with the agency of the Holy Spirit, the ministry of the Word and sacraments.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

3 The grace of inward sanctification.

(1) *That which gives effect to the instruments of good.*

[13148] The term grace includes that supernatural gift to man whereby he is enabled to embrace the salvation provided and offered, whereby the sufferings and merits of Christ, which are sufficient for the salvation of the whole world, are made available and effectual to the salvation of the faithful. And this is nothing else than the working of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of men.—*Ibid.*

4 The grace of prevention, operation, and co-operation.

(1) *Grace does not constrain the will, but delivers it from bondage and makes it truly free.*

[13149] As St. Austin saith well, A man that is freed from sin ought to thank God as well for the sins that he hath not committed as for the sins that he hath had forgiven ; for it is a greater mercy that a man fall not into sin as for his sin to be pardoned. And so for troubles too. It is God's mercy to prevent troubles as well as to deliver out of trouble when we are fallen into it.—*R. Sibbes, D.D.*, 1577–1635.

[13150] Grace may be distinguished into (1) the *preventing* grace, which gives the first notions towards goodness ; (2) the *operating*, which produces the freewill to good ; (3) the *co-operating*, which supports the will in its struggles, and enables it to carry its desire into act ; and, lastly (4), the *gift of perseverance.*—*Augustine*

III. Its Properties.

[13151] Divine grace is (1) *sovereign* (Rom. v. 21), springing wholly from the Divine sovereignty and good pleasure seen in (*a*) the election of the saints of God without any merit to commend them, but in spite of natural enmity against God ; (*b*) the passing by of the apostate angels, though, to our finite judgment, their redemption would have conduced more to "the praise of the glory" of Divine grace ; (*c*) the calling away of so many in infancy and early life . . . without the conflicts and troubles of earth's hard battle-field. (2) *Free*, the result of no necessity on the part of God ; no moral obligation to confer grace. Grace is not an essential attribute of Deity, which must manifest itself in a certain channel ; nor from any merit, or fitness, or deserving on the part of man.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13152] In Romans iii. 24 "freely" seems to point, first, to the exclusion and negation of human merit and desert, and, secondly, to the Being from whom the gift descends. "By His grace," on the other hand, directs attention, first, to the Being from whom the gift descends ; and, secondly, to the exclusion of human merit and desert. Their combination teaches that "if grace," as Augustine pithily says, "be grace in any way, it must be grace, or gratuitous, in every way."—*C. N.*

[13153] I may compare this free grace of God to a diamond ; as it came out of the rock it came pure and whole and fair, and it was as curiously cut, as I may so express it, by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that all the lustres of it might have their utmost advantage : but now all the hazard is, when it comes to be set in the ring, set in our hearts, set in faith—though faith be gold—lest it should be so unskilfully set as that any of the lustres of this diamond should be impaired, that though there be never so much in us, good works or whatever it be, yet all may say—faith speaking in the name of all the rest—We do but serve to hold forth the glories of this grace, and the full brightness of them, without obscuring any.—*T. Goodwin, D.D.*, 1600–1679.

[13154] The very fact of the Lord's being gracious shows sin to be so evil a thing, that man being a sinner, his state is utterly ruined and hopeless, and nothing but free grace will do for him—can meet his need.—*Anon. Quoted by Dr. H. Bonar.*

[13155] If God should make us an offer thus large—"Search all the generations of men since the fall of Adam, find one that has done only one action which has passed from him pure, without any stain or blemish at all, and for that one man's only action neither men nor devils shall be tormented," do you think any one person could be found that has done one such perfect action ? We firmly believe not ; and, if so, then all must be of free grace. It is the

peculiar glory of gospel grace to humble every believer in the dust, and from gratitude and love to produce the best obedience.—*Hooker.*

[13156] Grace is (1) *Eternal.* The foundation of the everlasting covenant given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, and reaching in its effects to all eternity to come. (2) *Manifold.* A stream running in many diverse channels (1 Pet. iv. 10). (3) *Abundant* (Rom. v. 15–17, 20), called "rich" (Eph. i. 7), "glorious" (Eph. i. 6), "exceeding abundant" (2 Cor. ix. 14). (4) *True* (1 Pet. i. 12).—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

IV. Its Process.

[13157] Tyndale tells us that "a block of ice under the converged sunbeam will suddenly (an inch or inches below the surface) seem to resolve itself into a cluster of glittering stars, each with six petal-rays, shining with the lustre of burnished silver. Those petal-rays are a tiny water-flower, formed around a star-like vacuum, and vying in beauty with the frost-works of a winter's morning." So, down deep in the icy heart of the worldling, the little water-flowers are forming around the vacuum that glitters in the consciousness, under the melting power of love; and the little water-drops trickle out here and there, when none but the All-seeing notes their fall.—*S. H. Platt.*

[13158] Grace comes into the soul as the morning sun into the world; there is first a dawning, then a mean light, and at last the sun in his excellent brightness.—*T. Adams.*

[13159] The grandest operations, both in nature and in grace, are the most silent and imperceptible. The shallow brook babbles on its passage, and is heard by every one; but the coming on of the seasons is silent and unseen. The storm rages and alarms; but its fury is soon exhausted, and its effects are partial and soon remedied; but the dew, though gentle and unheard, is immense in quantity, and the very life of large portions of the earth. And these are pictures of the operations of grace in the Church and in the soul.—*Richard Cecil.*

V. Its Blessedness and Influence.

[13160] This is the inexhaustible source of all those inestimable blessings which the Lord bestows on His unworthy creatures in this or in a future world. It is this which, in all that He does, or ever will do for sinners, He intends to render everlastingly glorious in their eyes, and in the eyes of all holy intelligences. The indelible motto inscribed by the hand of Jehovah on all blessings of the evangelical covenant is, "To the praise and glory of His grace." . . . Divine grace as reigning in our salvation not only appears, but appears with majesty; not only shines, but triumphs; providing all things, bestowing all things, working in us (and with us) all things necessary to our eternal happiness —*Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge.*

[13161] As grace weakens, so does corruption more and more increase, and as grace increases, so does corruption lose of its strength. These two are like a pair of balances, when the one goes up the other is sure to go down.—*Thos. Horton, D.D.*

[13162] Grace infuses a spirit of activity into a person; grace doth not lie dormant in the soul; it is not a sleepy habit, but it makes a Christian like a seraphim, swift-winged in his heavenly motions; grace is like fire, it makes one burn in love to God.—*T. Watson, D.D.*

[13163] By God's grace the most abject of His creatures may rise to the rank of a celestial force.—*Mme. Swetchine.*

[13164] Grace is that which truly ennobles the soul; it raises it up to converse with the highest and with the noblest objects, and every man is as the objects are with which he converses. If the objects are noble, the man is so; if the objects are base with which a man converses, the man is base. A man may better know what he is by eyeing the objects with which his soul does mostly converse, than by observing his most glorious and pompous services.—*T. Brooks*, 1608–1680.

[13165] Grace is of the greatest and sweetest use to the soul; it is an anchor at sea, and a shield at land; it is a staff to uphold the soul, and a sword to defend the soul; it is bread to strengthen the soul, and wine to cheer the soul; it is physic to cure all diseases, and a plaster to heal all wounds, and a cordial to strengthen the soul under all faintings. Grace is thy eye to see for Christ, thy ear to hear for Christ, thy head to contrive for Christ, thy tongue to speak for Christ, thy hand to do for Christ, and thy feet to walk with Christ.—*Ibid.*

[13166] There is a Divine chemistry which can extract the purest spirits out of the most gross and feculent matter. The beast on the altar differs not in kind from the beast at the slaughter. There is a lawful craft of coining our money over again, and adding the image and superscription of God to that which is Cæsar's. It is said of the philosopher's stone, that it turns whatsoever it touches into gold.—*Secker.*

[13167] The power which is to bring us to God is not any human device, however excellent or however useful; it is not instruction, or example, or exhortation, or education; it is not anything to act upon our outward conduct, or that is to reach us through our senses; it is the direct influence of God, and of God only. These various influences which act upon us from without are excellent in their place. They are, we may say, the work of the husbandman on the soil. But

they are all in vain unless the seed have life in itself. No work of the husbandman can make dead seed grow; and so no work of man can make a soul which had not God's grace into a servant or a child of God. There is one power, and one only, which can lay hands on the enemy with whom we are contending; and that power is the power that first made the soul itself. He who stands as it were behind the secret fountains from which our being issues, He and He alone can deal with this awful disease by which we are all afflicted; He and He alone can attack sin in the very citadel of its dominion, and win the victory which we could never win.—*Bp. Temple.*

[13168] What is grace? Grace, some ancient misbelievers asserted, was exterior influence, God's authority, or God's favour and benefit. Grace, modern people reiterate, is something of the same kind; a mere expression for a smile of kindliness, so to speak, on the face of the Creator. Grace is nothing of the sort. Grace is *a power*, an interior power, an internal force; it comes from the life of God; it pierces to the soul of man. It cannot be seen, but it can be felt in its consequences, and verified in its results; and for that reason it is parallel to the forces of nature, with which all are more or less conversant. To borrow an obvious illustration by no means original: Is any one in the habit of working in the telegraph office? If so, he guides, almost governs, forces which he cannot see, forces he cannot measure, except in their consequences; forces awful and real, though unseen; forces the mystery of which he cannot fully explain, although he may register their effects; and so, at his slightest motion of that little needle, lo! a message is flying across the world, because an influence from the powers of nature is brought to bear on a special object, through the scientific research and successful efforts of human minds, and under the guidance of a free and energetic will. Now this is like grace. Grace is a power from the love of God. He "charges" His Church with it, if I may use the simile, in order that the battery of that Church may play upon the soul. Grace is no magical influence; it requires, as it forms a moral conformity. Grace is no superstitious imagination; grace is no mere *influence* at all. It is an interior *force*; it is that "well of water springing up into everlasting life." Oh, my brothers! it is the life, the essential life-force of the Creator, as it is applied through the human life of the Incarnate Jesus, giving strength to the sacraments, meaning to the teaching of the Word, force to our prayers, vitality and energy to the poor soul that must stand face to face with its God, and wants the strength to love and act upon His truth. That is grace.—*Rev. W. J. Knox-Little.*

[13169] Cicero complains of Homer—that he taught the gods to live like men; but grace teaches men to live like gods.—*W. Secker.*

[13170] It is the very nature of grace to make a man strive to be most eminent in that particular grace which is most opposed to his bosom sin.—*Thomas Brooks.*

VI. Its Evidence and Witness.

[13171] Grace is known by its own evidence. It is the white stone, shining to him only that does possess it; for a man is no more able to express this work, so as to convey a full notion of it to the mind of him that has it not, than by words and discourse to convey an idea of colours to him who was born blind, or the proper relish of meats to him who has no taste. —*R. South, D.D.*, 1633–1716.

[13172] There are three things which are pertinent hereunto. There's the having of grace, the discerning of grace, and the acknowledging of it. The first lays ground for the second, and the second for the third; and all must go together. We must have it, that we may discern it; and where we do discern it, we must own it, and acknowledge it in ourselves.—*J. Horton*, 1675.

[13173] A diamond will shine even in the dust.—*D. Dyke*, 1618.

[13174] Grace doth not lie as a sleepy habit in the soul, but will put forth itself in vigorous and glorious actings. Grace can no more be concealed than fire; like new wine, it will have vent. Grace doth not lie in the heart as a stone in the earth, but as seed in the earth; it will spring up into good works.—*T. Watson.*

VII. Its Abuse.

1 When the doctrine is perverted by the misrepresentations of antinomianism and kindred theories.

[13175] Properly speaking, those only are antinomians who are avowedly hostile to the law of God; who neither preach nor profess to embrace it, but term those legalists who do. . . . Others of a similar description, but who are not aware of the tendency of their own statements, have embraced a system which, by perverting the doctrine of Divine decrees and efficacious grace, sets aside all moral obligation, and destroys the accountability of man. Justification by such a species of faith as is not necessarily productive of good works, and the righteousness imputed to it, are the doctrines by which this class of professors are distinguished.—*Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge.*

[13176] Antinomianism means, literally, opposed to law, or, as the word is generally understood, to the moral law of God. We first read in ecclesiastical history of the antinomianism of various Gnostic sects, not only held as a pure theory, but in its development of gross licentiousness. The principal Gnostic teachers maintained that there was a radical difference amongst men; some, created evil, were incapable

of salvation; and others, who were of celestial or Divine origin, would finally be saved, however licentious their lives. St. Irenæus gives an account of the gross immorality of the followers of Simon Magus, and of Carpocrates and the Cainites, and there are allusions to Gnosticism in the New Testament—its strange and monstrous creed, &c.—by St. Paul (1 Tim. vi. 20, 21; Col. ii. 18, 19; 1 Tim. iv. 1–5) and St. John (1 John ii. 18–22, iii. 7–9). But we should wholly mistake the theory of antinomianism did we suppose that it merely flowed from man's corrupt nature, or was an excuse for the gratification of his evil desires. Antinomianism, or such opinions as generally or necessarily lead to it, alleges in its support the teaching of Holy Scripture, and we cannot doubt, from the allusions to faith by Gnostic teachers, that they attempted in some degree to justify their licentiousness from the supposed meaning of St. Paul's teaching on justification. . . .

The teaching of Holy Scripture on the subject will be seen in Deut. v. 29, vi. 24, 25, x. 12, 13, xxx. 9, 10; Psa. lxxxi. 11–16, cxii. 1–4; Isa. i. 16–20, xxxii. 17, lviii. 6–11; Eccles. xii. 11; Micah vi. 8; Matt. vii. 16–27, xxv. 31–45; John xiv. 15, 21, 23, 24, xv. 2, 8, 10; Rom. ii. 6–10; Gal. vi. 7, 8; Eph. ii. 10; 1 John ii. 3–6, 17, 29, iii. 4, 6–10, v. 3, 18; 1 Pet. i. 14, 15; 2 Pet. i. 3–11; Rev. xxii. 12, 14, 15; and the Church, following its guidance, has ever represented as of primary and indispensable importance the duty of obedience to God's commandments, which is the only satisfactory proof of love to Him; and has condemned such theories not merely as presumptuously intruding into those "secret things" which belong to God only (see Deut. xxix. 29), but as likely to set aside our bounden duties and obligations as Christians, assuring us that "in keeping God's commandments we please Him both in will and deed."—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13177] John Agricola, the founder of antinomianism—at first a disciple of Luther, but afterwards an opponent both to him and Melancthon—is said to have taught that the law ought not to be proposed as a rule of life, nor used in the Church as a means of instruction; and, of course, that repentance is not to be preached from the Decalogue, but from the Gospel only; that the Gospel alone is to be inculcated and explained, and that good works do not promote our salvation, nor evil works hinder it.—*Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge.*

[13178] The unguarded expressions which some persons have used, the bold positions they have advanced, and the construction to which their language is liable, have led others to charge them with antinomian principles, when in reality they meant not so. As when they have spoken lightly of good works, or have asserted that believers have nothing to do with the law of God without fully explaining what they mean; . . . these, and similar expressions, whatever be the private sentiments of those who advance them, have a direct tendency to injure the minds and morals of mankind, though it be under a pretence of enhancing the riches and freeness of Divine grace.—*Ibid.*

VIII. Distinction between True Grace and its Counterfeit.

[13179] We could not ask less than a volume to state the differences whereby we may discriminate counterfeit virtues from true in all their several specialities. They are faced alike; they are clad alike; the marks are inward, and scarce discernible by any but the owner's eyes. In a generality we shall thus descry them in our own hearts. True grace comes down from above, even from the Father of Light; God's Spirit, working with and by His own ordinances, produceth it in the soul, and feeds it by the same holy means whereby it is wrought; the counterfeit is earth bred, arising from mere nature out of the grounds of sensuality. True grace drives at no other end than the glory of the Giver, and scorns to look lower than heaven; the counterfeit aims at nothing but vain applause or carnal advantage, not caring to reach an inch above his own head. True grace is apt to cross the plausiblest inclinations of corrupt nature, and cheers up the heart to a delightful performance of all good duties as the best pastime: the counterfeit is a mere parasite of fleshly appetite, and finds no harshness but in holy devotions. True grace is undauntedly constant in all opposition, and, like a well-wrought vault, is so much the stronger by how much more weight it undergoes. This metal is purer for the fire; this eagle can look upon the hottest sun: the counterfeit shows most gloriously in prosperity; but when the evil day cometh it looks like the skin of a dead chamelion, nasty and deformed. Lastly, true grace is best alone: the counterfeit is all for witnesses.—*Bp. Hall*, 1574–1656.

[13180] As grace is a fire to burn up and consume the dross and filth of the soul, so it is an ornament to beautify and adorn the soul. True grace makes all new, the inside new and the outside new: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. v. 17), but temporary grace doth not this. True grace changes the very nature of a man. Moral virtue doth only restrain or chain up the outward man, it doth not change the whole man. A lion in a grate is a lion still; he is restrained, but not changed, for he retains his lion-like nature still. So temporary grace restrains many men from this and that wickedness, but it doth not change and turn their hearts from wickedness.—*Brooks.*

IX. Distinction between Restraining Grace and Renewing Grace.

[13181] There is a great difference between *restraining* and *renewing* grace; the one only charms and chains up sin; the other crucifies

and weakens it, whereby the vigour of it is not withheld only, but abated. The one turns the motion and stream of the heart to another channel; the other keeps it in bounds only, though still it runs its natural course. The one is contrary to the *reign*, the other, only to the *rage* of sin.—*Bp. Reynolds*, 1599–1676.

X. Questions raised on the Subject.

1 If God would have all men to be saved, and if Christ died for all men, why is it that *all* are *not* saved?

[13182] God's principal desire and will touching man's happiness is not always satisfied. The whole history of mankind, the whole narrative of the Bible, is but a long example of God's designs of mercy thwarted by man's negligence, perverseness, and sin. Our Lord's words when He wept over Jerusalem suggest the only answer which can be given.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13183] It is true, indeed, that grace, wherever it is, hath a principle in itself, that makes it desire and endeavour to preserve itself, according to its strength; but being overpowered, must perish, except assisted by God, as fire in green wood (which deadens and damps the part kindled) will in time go out, except blown up, or more fire be put to that little. So with grace in the heart; God brings His grace into the heart by conquest: now, as in a conquered city, though some yield and become true subjects to the conqueror; yet others plot how they may shake off this yoke: and therefore it requires the same power to keep, as was to win it at first. The Christian hath an unregenerate part, that is discontented at this new change in the heart, and disdains as much to come under the sweet government of Christ's sceptre, as the Sodomites that Lot should judge them. What! this fellow, a *stranger*, control us! And Satan heads this mutinous rout against the Christian: so that if God should not continually reinforce this His new planted colony in the heart, the very natives, I mean, corruptions, that are left, would come out of their dens and holes where they lie lurking, and eat up the little grace the holiest on earth hath; it would be as bread to these devourers.—*Gurnal.*

[13184] It is on all sides confessed that His will in this kind oftentimes succeedeth not, the cause whereof is a personal impediment making particular men incapable of that good which the will of His general providence did ordain for all mankind.—*Hooker.*

2 If salvation be of grace, has then man nothing to do?

[13185] Man has nothing to do in the way of earning any *merit*, but much in the way of accepting and receiving. The Holy Spirit works in us as rational, responsible beings, by loving constraint, not by mechanical impulse. We are to use the appointed means, to "buy without money and without price;" to hold out the withered hand to receive the gift; to bring the empty pitcher to the flowing river.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

3 Is the revelation of the gospel an external instruction merely, or is it accompanied by a supernatural work on the heart of the hearer?

[13186] "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." "As often as ye eat this bread . . . ye do show forth the Lord's death." The Spirit, "when He is come, will convince the world of sin," &c. Hence, with an adequate proposal of the gospel by the Word and sacraments, there is always exerted on the hearts of men the great power of the gospel, the death of Christ, through the influence of the Spirit. . . . Hooker distinguishes between the aptness and ableness of the will—the aptness freely to take or refuse things set before it, which is so essential to the will that, being deprived of this, it loses the nature and cannot possibly retain the definition of will—and the ableness which actuates the possibility of the will in that which is good. This ableness has been lost. If we had kept our first ableness, we should not need grace; had aptness been also lost, grace could work in us no more than it does in brute creatures. Freedom of operation we have by nature, but the ability of virtuous operation by grace ("Hooker's Works").—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

4 What has God's grace effected for mankind irrespective of the revelation of the mystery?

[13187] Christ is the Saviour of all men, though especially of them that believe (1 Tim. v. 10). He has rendered all men *salvabiles*—capable of salvation, and *salvandos*—designed to salvation. He has redeemed all mankind (see Barrow, "Sermons on Universal Redemption"). With regard to those who have not the gospel, the law of nature written in men's hearts, the dictates of reason, the secret whisper of grace and checks of conscience, the ordinary works of creation, the continual expression of God's beneficence — by these men may seek God, if haply they may feel after Him and find Him (Acts xvii. 27). And these are by the grace of God, by the working of the Spirit, in virtue of the Incarnation, no less than the grace of the gospel. The Spirit strives with all men, and from the first there has been no influence of the Spirit, except in virtue of Christ's mediation.—*Ibid.*

5 Is there in those who do obey a more energetic action of God's grace than in those who do not obey?

[13188] A variety in the measures of outward grace is evident; but there is no proof in Holy Scripture that any difference is made by the Holy Spirit between any two men who are alike subjected to the same measure of outward grace. They who assert that there is such a

difference are led to the assertion as an inference from the doctrine of election and predestination. We are not to draw inferences from that doctrine, as if it were within our comprehension, and could possibly be made one of the premisses of a syllogism. The Scriptures which speak of the calling of the elect do not deny the calling of others. Romans viii. 29, 30, asserts that the elect, whosoever and wheresoever they are, in due time are called. It does not assert the superiority of the call which is obeyed over that call (Matt. xx. 16) which is not obeyed. It implies the further grace given to those who obey the first call; that further grace would have been given to all had all alike been obedient.—*Ibid.*

[13189] Persons coming below a certain standard are, as candidates or competitors, regarded equally in the light of failures. There is in one sense "no difference" between them, although in many respects there may be much difference in their bodily and mental prowess. For instance, all the men in a village who wish to enlist in the Life Guards might be rejected because they came below the regulation height. There would be no difference between them in regard to their qualifications for admission, yet, compared with each other, they would vary much in stature and physique. Or, again, all the candidates for a government examination might fail to reach the prescribed standard. Now, there would be, doubtless, a wide difference between the best and worst of these; but none in relation to the vacant appointments. It is not meant that there is no diversity in the characters of men, and in the respective measures of their guilt. In relation to the need, offer, and efficacy of God's righteousness there is no real difference and appreciable distinction. All alike stand in need of the Divine righteousness; all, too, may in the appointed way become possessed of this gift, and attain unto the glory of God. In these respects there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, and between man and man, considered under every phase of life; none "between sovereigns, for instance, and their meanest subjects; between the cultivated and the most uncultured; between the sage and savage: no difference between the most punctilious Pharisee who observes every ceremony of the Church, and, gathering up his garments, steps fastidiously aside from every indecency of social life, and the most reckless offcasts who 'rough it' on the highways of life, or riot and rot in the lowest of our city dens" (J. Morison).—*C. N.*

6 Does the grace of God work in the elect or with them? Does it require a concurrent action of man's will?

[13190] Our present wording of the Tenth Article of Religion . . . is based on those Scriptures which, while they speak of God's working in us, require at the same time the work of man, thus, "preventing us that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will." Work, for God works with you, and both the will and the work are God's (2 Pet. i. 10; Heb. xii. 15; 1 John iii. 24). And all the varied precepts of Scripture given to those who have received the grace of God show the same, that we are to work because God worketh in us.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13191] All those to whom the gospel is adequately proposed are called by God's grace. Many are called; but the grace is not irresistible, and few are chosen.

[13192] According to Calvinism, grace is indefectible—that is, grace which cannot be lost, or fail of its intended purpose—the salvation of those on whom it is bestowed. Such is the grace, according to the theory given to the elect, which is represented as irresistible, or necessarily leading to salvation. It is shown . . . that, according to Holy Scripture, grace is not irresistible, and that this Calvinistic tenet cannot be reconciled with man's free-will.—*Ibid.*

[13193] Let the Spirit be never so prompt, if labour and exercise slacken, we fail. The fruits of the Spirit do not follow men, as the shadow doth the body, of their own accord. If the grace of sanctification did so work, what should the grace of exhortation need? It were even as superfluous and vain to stir men up unto good as to request them when they walk abroad not to lose their shadows. Grace is not given us to abandon labour, but labour required lest our sluggishness should make the grace of God unprofitable.—*Hooker.*

[13194] It is possible to come short of the promise of the grace of God.—*W. M. Punshon.*

[13195] So long as the concurrence of man's will and man's work is required, so long will a failure in man defeat God's mercy, so long may he quench the Spirit, so long may he depart from grace given, and draw back unto perdition (Heb. x. 39). God's grace is sufficient; but grace, excluding possibility to sin, was neither given to angels in their first creation, nor to man before his fall, but reserved for both till God be seen face to face in the state of glory. Grace is not therefore given here in that measure which taketh away possibility of sinning, and so effectually moveth the will as that it cannot. —*Hooker.*

[13196] The good angels did not make their own wills good. God created them, as He did man, wholly good. God upheld them, freely through His grace choosing Him. They abode in the good-will in which God had created them, by abiding in Him; their good-will abode in them, because, through the grace wherewith He endowed them, they, upheld by Him, clave inseparably to Him, and, by partaking of Him, were fixed in unchangeable bliss through His unchangeableness.—*Dr. Pusey.*

[13197] God worketh in us these three things

—to think, to will, to perform what is good; to think, without us; to will, with us; to perform, through us. From God then, doubtless, is the beginning of our salvation, and not either through us nor with us. But consent and act, although not from us, are not yet without us. We must beware lest, when we feel these things done invisibly in us or with us, we attribute them either to our will, which is weak, or to a necessity from God, which is none; but to the grace of God wherein He aboundeth. Grace arouseth free-will when it soweth the thought; healeth, when it changeth the affection; strengtheneth, when it leadeth to act; preserveth, lest it fail. But grace so worketh with free-will, that it forecometh only in thought, in the rest accompanying; to this end forecoming, that henceforth it may be co-operated with. Yet so what was begun by grace alone is perfected conjointly, so that in each advance they operate unitedly, not severally—together, not alternately. Grace doth not act in part, and free-will in part; but they each, by an undivided operation, accomplish the whole. Free-will doth all, and grace doth all; yet, as the whole is *in* free-will, so the whole is *from* grace.—*St. Bernard.*

7 Who are in a state of grace?

[13198] In the first degree the whole world are in a state of grace. God so loved the world that He sent His only Son. The benefits accruing to mankind in general through the Incarnation cannot be overrated. Secondly, in a higher degree all are in a state of grace, to whom is come the Word which preaches peace by Jesus Christ. But the words, "state of grace," are commonly used, as is natural among Christian men, with reference to the grace of inward sanctification. . . . It is by the washing of regeneration that men are put into a state of grace (Titus iii. 5). The Holy Spirit then imparts a new principle by which the mind and will of man, . . . before weighed down are purified and elevated. Further grace is added to sustain the new life, that the whole body, soul, and spirit may be preserved blameless unto the coming of Jesus Christ. They, then, are in a state of grace who live and walk in the Spirit, and the measure and test of their state are the fruits of the Spirit that they bear. And the Spirit of God witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God, not by oracle, or voice, or whisper within us, but, first, by those gracious fruits and effects which it has wrought in us; and, secondly, by enlightening our understandings, and assisting the faculties of our souls, as need requires, to discern those gracious fruits and effects (Bull, "Discourse on the Testimony of the Spirit"). The testimony of a renewed conscience is the witness of the Spirit that we are in a state of grace.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13199] As the chief condition for a man being in the state of grace, we mention, first, that the life must be firmly grounded on the foundation of baptism. But although, in a certain sense, it may be said that all the baptized are placed under grace, it must yet, on the other hand, be allowed that, in order to stand in grace, it is not only requisite to be baptized, but also that we stand in personal relation to the grace that has been bestowed on us in baptism. And here, presupposing baptism, we know of nothing else to be mentioned but repentance and faith. Repentance, as repenting of sin and regret for sin, is not exclusively in place only in the history of the once occurring conversion. For although conversion may be regarded as a single event in a definite portion of man's life, the matter is by no means so that we are done with conversion once for all. We need a continued conversion, "daily sorrow and repentance," with ever new renunciation of the kingdom of darkness, and the spirit of darkness, till the day of our death. But inseparable from this is the faith that has not only once appropriated the comfort of the gospel, but daily appropriates it anew. This constant renewal in faith is, however, only possible in that we earnestly strive and oppose all that would disturb the life of faith in us, that is, only by a sincere will and resolve after righteousness of life and holiness. Thus if a Christian also sins—and "in many things we offend all"—as long as he ever repents again of his sin, and may be renewed in sincere sorrow for it; so long as he is raised up again by faith in the gospel, offered to him in the means of grace; and so long as he is renewed to obedience, and ever afresh engages in the struggle, so long he stands under grace, despite his sinfulness and incompleteness. And, on the other hand, it is evident that he who feels no regret for sin, in whom faith is only "a dead fly," an outward acceptance of certain statements, without heart-communion with the Lord; that he who knows of no struggle or resistance against sin, cannot possibly be in the state of grace.—*Bp. Martensen.*

XI. Homiletical Applications.

[13200] There is nothing so effectual to obtain grace, to retain grace, and to regain grace as always to be found before God, not over-wise, but to fear. Happy art thou if thy heart be replenished with three fears—a fear for received grace, a greater fear for lost grace, a greatest fear to recover grace.—*F. Quarles.*

[13201] The God of thy life, sinner, in whose hands thy times are, doth, with much higher right, limit thee to the present time and expects thy present answer to His just and merciful offers and demands. He circumscribes thy day of grace; it is enclosed on both parts, and hath an evening as well as morning; as it had a foregoing, so it hath a subsequent night; and the latter, if not more dark, yet is usually much more stormy than the former, for God shuts up this day in much displeasure, which hath terrible effects.—*J. Howe*, 1684.

[13202] The object of grace is not to change the nature of sin, or of its service, or of its wages, but to induce you to choose another master. The evil of sin does not consist in its producing misery or death, but in its essential contradiction to rightness. A righteousness which does not seek to make others righteous is not really righteousness. If we saw a father punishing his child, and when we asked him what effect he expected to produce, he were to answer, "I don't think of that; I only think of what he has deserved," should we not at once say that he was neither a loving father nor a righteous man? So long as I believe that God's condemnation of sin is not connected with this purpose, and that He punishes me merely because I deserve it, it is impossible to trust Him; but when I understand that His condemnation contains within it an unchangeable purpose to draw me out of my sin, I can accept His condemnation and bless Him for it. It seems to me that the gospel of Jesus Christ is just the full and living manifestation of this purpose—that it means this or nothing. The sentence of sorrow and death is not to be set aside, but passed through; and the foregone sins, though pretermitted and passed over—that is, not regarded by God as reasons for abandoning His purpose of training us in righteousness—must yet receive their penalty.—*The Spiritual Order and Other Papers, Selected from the Manuscripts of the late Thomas Erskine of Linlathen.*

[13203] God hath established a throne of grace whereon He sits, and unto which He invites His people to approach with a becoming confidence (Heb. iv. 16). "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace." As that emperor counted his clemency disparaged, when any delivered a petition to him with shaking hand, as though he doubted of his favour—so God loves, when we make our addresses to Him, that we should do it with full assurance of faith, nothing doubting of acceptance with Him and of an answer from Him. He that asks timorously only begs a denial from God; but yet, that this boldness may not degenerate into rudeness and irreverence, He requires that our freedom with Him be tempered with an awful fear of Him; we must come in all humility and prostration of soul, with broken hearts and bended knees, to touch the golden sceptre that He holds forth to us.—*Bp. Hopkins.*

[13204] The doctrine of free grace in every way exalts the love of God, it abases the pride of man, it furnishes the strongest foundation of . . . hope for all . . . united to Christ; it teaches the duty of forbearance in Christians to all men. If we have had such grace shown to us, should we not bear and forbear with others?—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13205] No doubt there are special moments and crises of the soul, when God comes near and whispers His very presence into the heart. There are special as well as ordinary gifts of grace, and it is possible to miss both. They may be to anticipate some great trial that is at hand, or to prepare us for a sudden advancement, or to lift us out of the fog of a blinding perplexity, or to assure us of His presence, before something takes us into the strife of tongues. God has His times for visiting the souls He loves; and it is our wisdom to seize them, and to take what they offer. Surely it is significant that it was when Solomon had been offering sacrifice to God, that God came to him with this offer, "Ask what I shall give thee." God met His child's gift by giving him another. The more we get, the more we become able to get. To be filled is one thing; to have much to be filled is another. A child's drinking-cup and the depths of the Atlantic may both brim over; but we know which holds most, and even God cannot force on us more than we can receive.

There is no exhausting the grace of God. What most grieves Him is to doubt Him. He is able to give us all, "much more than these." What we really need to learn is, how much God has for us; and to do is to get it; and to conquer is our strange dumbness in the presence of the King. There are many lessons we cannot learn. Life is not long enough here. Also, about many things it does not so much matter whether we learn them or not. But the gospel has its length, and breadth, and depth, and height, which we are to consider, if we cannot fathom them, and the one prayer we ought all of us in the time to come to learn to say more humbly, more sincerely, more gratefully, more trustfully than ever is, "Lord, show us the Father."—*Dr. Anthony Thorold, Bishop of Rochester.*

[For the misapprehensions of Pelagianism on this subject, and its contrast to Augustinianism, see Vol. I., Division E., No. 117.]

PART IV.

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION C. (*Continued*).

[5] Justification of Sinners.

SYLLABUS.

		PAGE
I.	Meaning of the Term and General Significance of Justification	472
II.	History of the Doctrine	473
III.	Man's Great Need of this Divine Provision	475
IV.	The Source or Origin of Justification	476
V.	Its Ground or Meritorious Cause	476
VI.	Its Instrumental Cause	480
VII.	Its Relation to Sanctification	484
VIII.	Question as to the Time of Justification	485
IX.	The Accordance between the Teaching of St. Paul and the Early Fathers...	486
X.	The Teaching of St. Paul and St. James Reconciled	486
XI.	The Articles of the Church of England on Justification	487
XII.	Importance of the Doctrine	488
XIII.	Homiletical Remarks	489

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION C. (*Continued.*)

5

JUSTIFICATION OF SINNERS.

I. Meaning of the Term and General Significance of Justification.

[13206] The term justification in theological usage is employed to designate the judicial act of God by which He pardons all the sins of the sinner who believes in Christ, receiving him into favour, and regarding him as relatively righteous, notwithstanding his past actual unrighteousness. Hence justification, and the remission or forgiveness of sin, relate to one and the same act of God, to one and the same privilege of His believing people (Acts xiii. 38, 39; Rom. iv. 5, 8). So, also, "the justification of the ungodly," the "covering of sins," "not visiting for sin," "not remembering sin," and "imputing not iniquity," mean to pardon sin and to treat with favour, and express substantially the same thing which is designated by "imputing or counting faith for righteousness." Justification is, then, an act of God, not in or upon man, but for him and in his favour; an act which, abstractly considered, respects man only as its object, and translates him into another relative state.—*McClintock and Strong, Cyclopædia.*

[13207] Justification is a forensic term which signifies the declaring or the pronouncing a person righteous according to law. It stands opposed to condemnation. It does not signify to make men holy, but the holding and declaring them free from punishment. It has been defined "an act of God's free grace in which He pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in His sight only for the righteousness of Christ."—*Edwards.*

[13208] The forensic or judicial sense of the term may be established by three distinct proofs arising from the antithetic, correlative, and equivalent expressions which occur in Scripture. 1. We place the *antithetic* first because the meaning of any term is often best ascertained from that of those which are placed in opposition to it. The Hebrew and Greek verbs which are employed to denote "justification" are invariably set over against such as denote "condemnation." They are applied to the *judgments of men* (Deut. xxv. 1; Prov. xvii. 15; Isa. v. 23. See also 2 Chron. xviii. 6, 7). Here and elsewhere two judicial sentences are mentioned which are directly the reverse of the other, and are so stated that the justification of the righteous no more signifies the infusion of righteousness than the condemnation of the wicked signifies the infusion of sin. With reference, again, to the *judgments of God*, the same terms are employed in the same way (Rom. viii. 33, 34; Matt. xii. 37; Rom. v. 16). Like condemnation, therefore, justification, its opposite, is a forensic and judicial term, and the latter can no more mean to make righteous inherently than the other can to deprave. 2. All the *correlative* terms with which it is associated bear a forensic character and designate the various circumstances which are implied in a process of judgment. In strict connection with it we read of a *judgment* (Psa. cxliii. 2); of a *judge* (Gen. xviii. 25; Rom. ii. 2); of a *tribunal* (Rom xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10); of an *accuser* (Rom. viii. 33, 34); of an *advocate* (1 John ii. 1); and of a sentence of absolution (Psa. xxxii. 1). 3. If the *equivalent* expressions which are sometimes substituted for justification, and sometimes serve to explain it, cannot imply infusion of righteousness, but denote either forgiveness or acceptance, they show that justification denotes a change in the sinner's judicial and not in his moral relation to God. Well, it is described as the *imputation of righteousness* (Rom. iv. 3, 6); it is inclusive of the *non-imputation*, the covering, the forgiveness of sin (Rom. iv. 7, 8); it is equivalent to reconciliation (2 Cor. v. 19); and it amounts to making us the righteousness of God (2 Cor. v. 21). These equivalents show that justification can mean nothing more than the acceptance of a sinner as righteous in the sight of God.—*J. Buchanan, D.D.* (*abridged*).

[13209] The justification of sinners is a judicial act of Him who is a just God and a Saviour, by which, for the sake of what Christ has done and suffered for them, He remits the punishment due to their offences, and accepts them as

righteous—as though they had fulfilled the law which all have violated.—*Bp. O'Brien.*

[13210] Justification, as employed in Scripture, both in the Old and in the New Testament, is a legal term, denoting the acquittal of the accused. It signifies not to make just, but to declare just, to acquit, to pronounce righteous. To quote all the passages in which it is thus employed would be tedious; let a few examples suffice: In the law of Moses God is represented as saying, "Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not, for I will not justify the wicked." But if to justify meant to make just or righteous, it is evident that in this sense it is highly pleasing to God to justify or make holy the wicked. When, then, God says, "I will not justify the wicked," the meaning must be, I will not acquit or absolve the wicked. "If," says Job, "I justify myself"—that is, if I should declare or profess myself to be righteous or innocent, "mine own mouth shall condemn me." And the same is the meaning of the term in the New Testament (Luke vii. 29, 35, xvi. 15; Acts xiii. 39; Rom. ii. 13). This meaning of the term will appear evidently to be the correct one, when we consider that it is by the sacred writers opposed to condemnation. This is done both in the Old and in the New Testament (Deut. xxv. 1; Prov. xvii. 15; 1 Kings viii. 32; Matt. xii. 37; Rom. v. 16, 18, viii. 33). These two terms, then, condemnation and justification, are contrasted: they are opposites—to justify is not to condemn, and to condemn is not to justify. But to condemn is not to make, but to declare guilty; it does not make him who was before righteous inherently wicked, but passes sentence upon him on account of his wickedness, real or supposed. If previously righteous, he still continues to be so; if wicked, his condemnation does not increase, but declares his wickedness. And hence justification, also, is not a making, but a declaring righteous; not a change of character, but a change of condition with respect to the law.—*Paton J. Gloag, D.D.*

[13211] What is "justification" in the New Testament sense but "moral rectification?" There can be no "justification" only in the case of innocence. But there can be "moral rectification" where there is sin. To be justified is to be made right, and to be made right requires faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in Him kills the "old man" of its corruptions and lusts, and creates the "new man" in righteousness of Christ. The righteousness of Christ is given to man—given as the countless beauties of the landscape are given to the sun.

II. History of the Doctrine.

1 Teaching of the Early Church fathers and the Latin Church.

[13212] Ecclesiastical science from the beginning of its development occupied itself with a discussion on the relation of faith to knowledge; but even those who attributed the greatest importance to the latter recognized faith as the foundation. A merely logical division into subjective and objective faith, and an intimation of a distinction between a historic and a rational faith (in Clemens Alexandrinus, "Stro. Mat.," ii. 454; Augustine, "De Trinitate," xiii. 2) were of little consequence. Two conceptions became prevailing; faith as a general religious conviction, particularly as confidence in God, and the acceptance of the entire doctrine of the Church, *fides Catholica*. The formula that faith alone without the works justifies is found in the full Pauline sense in Clemens Romanus (1 *ad* Corinthios c. 32), and is sometimes used by Augustine polemically in order to defend the freedom of grace and the priority of faith. More generally it is used as an argument against the necessity of the Jewish law (Irenæus, iv. 25; Tertullian, "Adv. Marcell." v. 3). The œcumenical synods were instrumental in gradually giving to the conception of *fides Catholica* the new sense that salvation could be found only by adherence to ecclesiastical orthodoxy. But as a mere acceptance was possible without a really Christian sentiment, and as the Pauline doctrine was misused by heretics in an antinomian sense, it was demanded that faith be proved by works. Church discipline developed this idea with regard to the sins of the faithful, so as to demand a satisfaction through penances and good works (Augustine, Serm., 151, 12). It became, therefore, the doctrine of the Church, that such faith alone works salvation as shows itself in acts of charity, while to merely external works, faith or charity is opposed as something accessory. Pelagius assumed only a relative distinction between naturally good works and the good works that proceed from faith; in opposition to which Augustine insisted that the difference is absolute, and that without faith no good works are possible at all. As salvation was thought to be conditioned by works also, it was, even when it was represented as being merely an act of God, identified with sanctification. The importance attributed to abstention created gradually a distinction between commands and advices, and the belief that through the fulfilment of the latter a virtue greater than required would arise (Hermes, Origen, Ambrose).—*McClintock and Strong, Cyclopædia.*

2 Teaching of the Greek Church.

[13213] Little discussion and little controversy has occurred on this doctrine in the Greek Church. Faith and works together are regarded as the conditions of salvation. The words of St. James are referred to first, yet faith is declared to be the stock from which the good works come as the fruits. The description of faith proceeds from the definition in the Epistle to the Hebrews to the acceptance of the entire ecclesiastical tradition. Man is said to participate in the merit of the Mediator

not only through faith, but also through good works. Among the latter are comprised the fulfilment of the commandments of God and of the Church, and, in particular, prayers, fastings, pilgrimages, and monastic life. They are considered useful and necessary, not only as a means of promoting sanctification, but also as penances and satisfaction.—*Ibid.*

3 Doctrine of the Reformers of the sixteenth century and the old Protestant dogmatics.

[13214] The Reformation of the sixteenth century renewed the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith alone, emphasizing, in the sense of Augustine, the entire helplessness of man, and made it the fundamental doctrine of the Reformed Church. This faith is represented as not merely an acceptance of historic facts, but is distinguished as *fides specialis* from the general religious conviction, arising amidst the terrors of conscience, and consisting in an entire despair of one's own merit and a confident surrender to the mercy of God in the atoning death of Christ. Worked by God, it does not work as virtue or merit, but merely through the apprehension of the merit of Christ. Its necessity lies in the impossibility of becoming reconciled with God through one's own power. Hence this reconciliation is impossible through good works, which are not necessary for salvation, though God rewards them, according to His promise, upon earth and in heaven, but, as a necessary consequence, the really good works will flow forth from faith freely and copiously. The opinion of Amsdorf that good works are an obstacle to salvation was regarded as an unfortunate expression, which may be taken in a true sense, though it is false if understood in a general sense. As man is unable to satisfy the law supererogatory works and a satisfaction through one's own works are impossible. Justification through love is impossible, because man cannot love God truly amidst the terrors of conscience. Hence justification is a Divine judicial act which, through the apprehension of the justice of Christ, apprehended in faith, accepts the sinner as just though he is not just.—*Ibid.*

[13215] The strict distinction between justification and sanctification was maintained, on the one hand, against scholasticism, which, through its Pelagian tendencies, seemed to offend against the honour of Christ, and to be unable to satisfy conscience, and, on the other hand, against Osiander, who regarded justification as being completed only in sanctification. The works even of the regenerated, according to the natural side, were regarded by the reformers as sins. The Reformed theology in general agreed with the doctrine of justification as stated above, yet did not make it to the same extent the fundamental doctrine of the whole theology. According to Calvin, justification and sanctification took place at the same time. The dogmatic writers of the Lutheran Church distinguished in faith, knowledge, assent, and confidence, assigning the former two to the intellect, the latter to the will. From the *fides generalis* they distinguished the justifying faith, and rejected the division into *fides informis et formata.* As a distinguishing mark they demanded from a true faith that it be efficient in charity. For works they took the Decalogue as a rule ; a certain necessity of works was strictly limited. But however firmly they clung in general to the conception of justification as something merely external and foreign (*imputatio justitiæ Christi*), some dogmatic writers held that justification had really changed something in man, and indeed presupposed it as changed. Hollaz pronounced this doctrine openly and incautiously, while Quemstedt designated these preceding acts as merely preparatory to conversion.—*Ibid.*

4 Doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages.

[13216] The scholastics regarded faith as an acceptance of the supersensual as far as it belongs to religion, differing both from intuition and from knowledge, and although essentially of a theoretic character, yet conditioned by the consent of the will, which, however, in the description of faith, is reduced to a *minimum.* Originally, only God is an object of faith, but mediately, also the Holy Scriptures ; as a summary of the Biblical doctrines, the Apostles' Creed, and, as its explication, the entire doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. As an accurate knowledge of the doctrines of the Church cannot be expected from every one, the subjective distinction was made between *fides implicita* and *explicita;* the former sufficient for the people, yet with the demand of a developed belief in some chief articles. There was, however, a difference of opinion on what these articles were, and even Thomas Aquinas wavered in his views. Faith may, even upon earth, partly become a science, and appears in this respect only as the popular form of religion. It is a condition of salvation, but becomes a virtue only when love as animating principle (*forma*) pervades it (*fides formata*) ; with a mere faith (*informis*) one may be damned. The *fides formata* includes the necessity o the good works for salvation, but they must be founded in pious sentiment. All other works not proceeding from faith are dead, though not entirely useless. The necessity of good works is fully carried out only by the inculcation of penance as *satisfaction*, but with constant reference to a union of the soul with Christ, and the moral effect of the good works. Justification, according to Thomas Aquinas, is a movement from the state of injustice into the state of justice, in which the remission of sins is the main point, though it is conditioned by an infusion of grace which actually justifies men. As an act of God which establishes in man a new state, it is accomplished in a moment. Among the people the Pelagian views prevailed that man by

merely outward works had to gain his salvation, and the Church became, especially through the traffic in indulgences, a prey to the immoral and insipid worship of ceremonies. In opposition to this corruption many of the pious Mystics pointed to the Pauline doctrine of faith. —*Ibid.*

5 Doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church since the Reformation.

[13217] The Council of Trent, in order to make a compromise with the Pauline formula, recognized faith as the beginning and the foundation of justification, but the full sense which Protestantism found in it was rejected. This faith is the general belief in Divine revelation, though in transition to a special faith, yet a mere knowledge which still gives room to mortal sins. Justification is remission of sins and sanctification through an infusion of the Divine grace, in as far as the merit of Christ is not merely imputed but communicated. It is given through grace, but as a permanent state it grows through the merit of good works according to the commandments of God and the Church, through which works the justified, always aided by the grace of God in Christ, have to render satisfaction for the temporal punishment of their sins, and to deserve salvation. Not all the works done before justification are sins, and to the justified the fulfilment of the commandments of God is quite possible, although even the saints still commit small, venial sins. A further development of this doctrine is found in the writings of Bellarmine. He admits faith only as *fides generalis*, as a matter of the intellect, yet as a consent, not a knowledge. Though only the first among many preparations for justification, a certain merit is ascribed to faith. The Council of Trent had rejected the imputation of the merits of Christ only as the exclusive ground of justification; Bellarmine rejected it altogether. He explicitly proclaimed the necessity of good works for salvation, though only a relative salvation. The *opera supererogationis*, which were not mentioned at Trent, though they remained unchanged in tradition and practice, are further developed by Bellarmine. According to him they go beyond nature, are not destined for all, and not commanded under penalties.—*Ibid.*

III. Man's Great Need of this Divine Provision.

[13218] A state of condemnation is the opposite of a state of justification; and by the assertion that man by nature is in a state of condemnation, we mean that man has transgressed the law of God, and that by this law he is condemned. It supposes a liability to punishment. Punishment is the penalty which the law pronounces against transgression; and man, by transgression, has become obnoxious to that penalty. Now, that this is the natural state of man, will be clearly seen when we consider these three things—that the law of God demands perfect obedience—that it pronounces a curse upon transgression, and in this consists its condemning power—and that we have all transgressed.—*Paton J. Gloag, D.D.*

[13219] Reason as we may about human depravity, apologize for men, or justify them as we may, they certainly do not justify themselves. Even in the deepest mental darkness concerning God, stifled, we may almost say, as regards their proper humanity, under the sottish and debasing effects of idolatry, still we see the conscience struggling with guilty fears, unable to find rest. An indescribable dread of evil still overhangs the human spirit. The being is haunted by shadows of wrath and tries all painful methods of self-pacification. Vigils, pilgrimages, sacrifices, tortures, nothing is too painful or wearisome that promises to ease the guilt of the mind. Without any speculations about justification, mankind refuse to justify themselves. A kind of despair fills the heart of the race. They have no courage. Whether they know God or not, they know themselves, and they sentence themselves to death. If they have only some obscure notions of a Divine Being, then they dread the full discovery of Him. If He lurks in their gods, they fear lest their gods should visit them in vengeance, or plague them by some kind of mischief. The sky is full of wrathful powers, and the deep ground also is full. Their guilty soul peoples the world with vengeful images of its own creation. And here, now, if we desire to find it, is the true idea of Christian justification. We discover what it is by the want of it. Justification is that which will give confidence, again, to guilty minds; that which will assure the base and humiliated soul of the world, chase away the demons of wrath and despair it has evoked, and help it to return to God in courage.—*Horace Bushnell, D.D.*

[13220] In the Book of Psalms it may be safely affirmed that every point in the gospel doctrine of justification is brought out by anticipation and strikingly exhibited in connection with the faith and worship of Old Testament believers. Here is the same confession of sin (xiv. 1); the same conviction of guilt and demerit (cxxx. 4, 7); the same fear of God's righteous judgment (vi. 1); the same sense of inevitable condemnation on the ground of God's law (cxliii. 2); the same earnest cry for undeserving mercy (li. 1); the same faith in His revealed character as the just God and the Saviour (xxv. 8); the same hope of pardon, resting on a propitiation (cxxx. 7); the same pleading of God's name, or the glory of all His perfections (xxv. 11); the same joy and peace in believing (lxxxix. 15, 16); the same trust in God and the faithfulness of His promises (lxxxix. 1, 2); the same trust in the Saviour of sinners (ii. 12); the same confidence in another righteousness than their own (lxxxiv. 9); the same patient, persevering, hopeful waiting upon God (lxii. 5–8).—*J. Buchanan, D.D. (condensed).*

IV. The Source or Origin of Justification.

1 The free grace and love of God.

[13221] Justification, instead of being inconsistent with grace, is its glory and triumph. If the atonement were intended to make God merciful, instead of only making way for Him to appear so, in a manner consistent with the principles of moral government; if, instead of being the contrivance, fruit, and expression of the Father's infinite love, it were to be exclusively ascribed to the interposition of the Son, by which Divine anger was transformed into pity, and the flames of vengeance were quenched in the blood of His cross, we could not speak of being justified freely through the grace of God. But when the whole emanated from the benevolence of God the Father; and when, in His pity for the apostate race of Adam, He determined to give up the Son who had been in His bosom from eternity, that He might justify the ungodly through His righteousness, and thus be at once the just God and the Saviour; this is grace, the wonders of which will fill immensity with its glory, and eternity with its praise.—*J. A. James.*

[13222] Salvation is no commercial transaction in which God, like a merchant, bargains to give so much for so much; but it is a Divine gift which, in the exercise of almighty power and God-like bounty, He confers upon the needy and the helpless.—*Rev. and Hon. B. W. Noel.*

[13223] Fifteen hundred years before Christ an important question was proposed, which has in all ages perplexed the wisest and best of men —"How can man be just with God?" It was felt that man was guilty; but how his guilt was to be pardoned, and man restored to his Maker's favour, was the great problem which the united sagacity of ages failed to solve. The *philosopher* tried. He discoursed much on the dignity of virtue and the law of morals; he lived temperately, and, by abstinence from popular vices, hoped to secure the wished-for blessing, but his heart was still an aching void, and his sin remained unpurged. The *people* tried. They came before God with "thousands of rams and ten thousands of rivers of oil; they gave their firstborn for their transgressions, the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul," but the conscience was still uncleansed, Jehovah unpropitiated, and the question unsolved, "How can man be just with God?" The *recluse* tried. He went far from the haunts of men, clothed his flesh in sackcloth, ate bitter herbs, dwelt in a solitary cave, and tried to make Heaven his debtor by weary works and self-mortification; but the heart was still sorrowful and the soul defiled. The music of the gospel is that we are justified freely by the grace of God, through Jesus Christ.—*H. Gill*, 1862.

[13224] To justify is evidently a Divine prerogative. It is God that justifieth (Rom. viii. 33). That Sovereign Being against whom we have so greatly offended, whose law we have broken by ten thousand acts of rebellion against Him, has, in the way of His own appointment, the sole right of acquitting the guilty, and of pronouncing them righteous. He appoints the way, provides the means, . . . and all in perfect agreement with the demands of His offended law and the rights of His violated justice. But although this act is in some places of the infallible Word more particularly appropriated personally to the Father, yet it is manifest that all the Three Persons are concerned in this grand affair, and each performs a distinct part in this particular, as also in the whole economy of salvation. The eternal Father is represented as appointing the way, and giving His own Son to perform the conditions of our acceptance before Him (Rom. viii. 32); the Divine Son as engaged to sustain the curse and make the atonement; to fulfil the terms and provide the righteousness by which we are justified (Titus ii. 14); and the Holy Spirit as revealing to sinners the perfection, suitableness, and freeness of the Saviour's work, enabling them to receive it as exhibited in the gospel of sovereign grace and testifying to their consciences complete justification by it in the court of heaven (John xvi. 8, 14).—*Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge.*

[13225] Our salvation is entirely God's gift to us; and it must be so, because we cannot make it or get it for ourselves; we have no power of our own to make it for ourselves, nothing of our own to offer in exchange for it. If our salvation does not come to us as God's free gift, it can never come to us at all. This is what St. Paul keeps insisting upon over and over again in his statements of the doctrine of justification; it is the foundation upon which the whole doctrine has to be reared. And so the very first step of all in the way of our salvation must be taken by God Himself; we can have nothing at all to do with it.—*Rev. Henry Harris, B.D.*

[13226] Men are justified by that method by which the Divine glory is most illustrated, and the honour of our salvation referred to God alone. But those who determine that man is justified by any virtues or works, in the matter of justification, do not leave the glory of man's salvation entirely with God, but ascribe it, in some part to their own merit. But, as we are accustomed to ascribe the whole glory of alms promised and given, not to the beggar receiving them, but to the donor freely bestowing them, so we assign the whole glory of man's justification and salvation, not to faith tending towards Christ, and attaching Him to itself, but to God Himself, gratuitously justifying the believer.—*Bp. Davenant.*

V. Its Ground or Meritorious Cause.

1 The perfect righteousness of Christ.

[13227] The righteousness by which we are

justified must be equal to the demands of that law according to which the Sovereign Judge proceeds in our justification. But where shall we find, or how shall we obtain a justifying righteousness? . . . That which is the end of the law is our righteousness, . . . the obedience of our exalted substitute (Rom. x. 4). . . . "By Jesus Christ all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses (Acts xiii. 38, 39). "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25).—*Edwards.*

[13228] Christ's death expiated our sins, rendered satisfaction to the Divine justice, merited pardon, righteousness, and every blessing for time and eternity for the family of man. Concerning all this we have the testimony upon the cross, "It is finished." But there were yet some things necessary for men's actual participation in the benefits of Christ's blood-shedding.

1. The first of these acts was one which we had nothing to do with, one entirely on God's part. The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ was the act which publicly and authoritatively proclaimed before the intelligent creation that the sacrifice was accepted, and that all who believe on Christ might be acquitted of sin and proclaimed righteous. In the resurrection of Christ was involved the justification of every one who shall be justified, as all future oaks are wrapped up in the single acorn.

2. The other of these acts is partly on God's side and partly on ours. A dead Christ was not the object to quicken faith in man. A risen, living, life-giving Christ was the object by which God would produce the "gift of faith." "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (John xii. 32). We look to the death of Christ, but by virtue of the power we receive from a living and not a dead Saviour. "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection" (Phil. ii. 10), was the apostle's desire. In fine, the resurrection of Christ rendered available and energizing the act of acquitting sin and accounting righteous.—*C. N.*

[13229] If we are justified solely on the ground of the perfect work of Christ, there is nothing to prevent the justification of all men, without a single thought or act on their part, but the rectoral character and relation of Jehovah, which renders it necessary that some rule of justification should be enacted, that the justice of the Divine Being may be rendered apparent by His bestowing it upon those, and those only, who comply with that rule.—*Dr. Payne.*

[13230] 1. Man is naturally and necessarily under a law to God. 2. This being so, some righteousness is absolutely necessary to his justification. 3. Every righteousness, however, is not sufficient for this purpose. That righteousness must be such as fully answers to the purity and perfection of that law under which man is placed, and which God has given him as the rule of his obedience 4. But we have no such righteousness of our own, nor can any mere creature furnish us with it. 5. Christ, however, has such righteousness, by virtue of that perfect obedience with which He has performed the law. 6. If ever we are justified, therefore, it must be by the righteousness of Christ, by what He did and suffered in our room and stead.—*Rawlin*, 1797 (*condensed*).

[13231] The justification of sinners is directly connected with Christ as a propitiation, and described, in every variety of expression, as having been effectually procured by and founded upon that propitiation. It is connected (1) with the death of Christ (Rom. v. 10); (2) with the blood of Christ (Eph. i. 7; Rom. v. 9); (3) with the obedience of Christ (Rom. v. 19); (4) with the righteousness of Christ (2 Cor. v. 21); (5) with the name of Christ (1 Cor. vi. 11; Acts x. 43); (6) with the knowledge of Christ (Isa. liii. 11; John xvii. 3, 4). In short, in every part of Scripture this connection is seen, and Christ's people are so absolutely dependent on what He did and suffered for their pardon and acceptance that He is said to be their life, their peace, their righteousness, their hope, their joy, as if "all their springs were in Him," and "Christ were all in all."—*J. Buchanan, D.D.* (*condensed*).

[13232] There are three distinct considerations which should be seriously weighed before we adopt the opinion that the pardon of sin restores us to a state of innocence, and that nothing more is necessary to raise us to acceptance with God. 1. Adam before his fall was innocent—*i.e.*, not guilty, and even personally holy; but while he continued in a state of probation, he was not righteous, in the sense of having a title to eternal life, which was promised only on condition of perfect obedience. 2. The precept of the Divine law not only forbids sin, but requires righteousness; and the mere remission of sins does not imply such a righteousness as is required. 3. While remission absolves us from guilt and condemnation, neither that nor even regeneration restores us to such a state of holiness as that in which Adam was created. We have still the remains of indwelling sin, and our acceptance can only be ascribed, therefore, to the merits of Christ.—*Ibid.*

[13233] A state of condemnation supposes a forfeiture of the reward of obedience, as well as a liability to the punishment of disobedience; and we, by our sins, have forfeited all claim to the favour of God; we are in a state of alienation from God. Now Christ has not only, by His atoning death, satisfied the penalty of the law, by reason of which we may be pardoned, but by His meritorious obedience He has procured for us a perfect righteousness, by reason of which we may be accepted as righteous. It is solely on the ground of the imputation of this righteousness that any sinner is justified before God; by reason whereof God declares him righteous, receives him into His favour, and

accounts him worthy of eternal life.—*Paton J. Gloag, D.D.*

[13234] There was a twofold manifestation of righteousness in the cross of Christ: (1) A manifestation of the righteousness of God the Father, in requiring a satisfaction to His justice, and in inflicting the punishment due to sin (Rom. iii. 25, 26). (2) A work of righteousness by God the Son—His vicarious righteousness as the Redeemer of His people when He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," and thus became "the end of the law for righteousness." But these two-Gods righteousness which was declared, and Christ's righteousness which was wrought out, although they may be distinguished, cannot be separated from one another; for they were indissolubly joined to the same propitiation.—*Ibid.*

[13235] When we use the word *imputation;* when we speak of our sins being imputed to Christ, and of His righteousness being imputed to us, we do not mean that there is, or can be, any actual transferrence; as if Christ, by the imputation of our sins, became personally sinful; or we, by the imputation of His righteousness, became personally righteous. No; the sins are still ours, but He endures the penalty on account of them; the righteousness is still His, but we, on account of it, receive the blessing. . . . We may dispute about the propriety of the words *impute* and *imputation*, but to deny what is thus intended to be expressed by them is to subvert the gospel, and to sweep away the sinner's only foundation of hope.—*Ralph Wardlaw, LL.D.*

[13236] The same word, which in Scripture is in some places translated imputed, is in other places rendered reckoned, accounted, laid to one's charge, put to one's account; all these signifying nearly the same thing. To impute is to reckon, or to account; and, therefore, to impute good or evil unto one is to reckon it to him, or to put it to his account—to judge, or esteem that he possesses it, and to deal with him accordingly. The word is used with reference both to what was originally ours, and to what was not formerly ours, but only became ours by virtue of such imputation. Thus Shimei beseeches David not to impute iniquity unto him, nor to remember what he did perversely against him (2 Sam. xix. 19). He acknowledges his guilt—that it was his own, only he deprecates its imputation—he entreats that it may not be laid to his charge, and that he may not be punished on account of it. So, also, we have an example, in the case of Phineas, of God's imputing righteousness to one, who before such imputation possessed it (Psa. cvi. 30, 31). In both these cases the term signifies dealing with men according to their personal character and real deserts. But the word is also applied to what is not ours antecedently to the imputation; and this is its meaning in all cases of substitution or suretiship, or when men are dealt with not on account of their own merits or demerits, but on account of the merits or demerits of others (Philemon 18, 19). So in like manner a debt is imputed to a surety, and the surety's payment to the debtor; and the virtues and vices of men are often imputed to their children.—*Paton J. Gloag, D.D.*

[13237] All doctrinal statements are liable to abuse; but then, as Bishop Butler has remarked, "A doctrine having been a shelter for enthusiasm, or made to serve the purpose of superstition, is no proof of the falsity of it; truth or right being somewhat real in itself, and so not to be judged of by its liableness to abuse, or by its supposed distance from, or nearness to, error" (Butler's "Sermons," p. 131). It has been well remarked that the root of this erroneous view of the imputation of Christ's righteousness lies in the notion that God requires good works from us, not for our sakes, but for His own. "If this be true, then, of course it is a matter of indifference who does the good works, whether it be Christ or His followers. If a man wants a map for his own use he buys it in the shop, and is indifferent whether it was executed by this person or that. If a master in a school wants to teach his boys how to draw a map, then, if a boy brings forward as his own work what is really the work of another, the master, instead of rewarding, will punish such a boy. Now, it should never be forgotten that our heavenly Father wants to teach us how to do good works, and that He requires a virtuous life from us, not really for His sake, but for our own. The doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ gave birth to the Roman Catholic doctrine about works of supererogation, and very naturally; for if God can act upon one fiction, of course He can act upon another, and regard the works of good people as if they were the works of the wicked. The speechless guest, at the marriage-supper, did not point to the gorgeous robe of the King's Son." (Webster's "Notes of Lectures on the New Testament," pp. 155, 6).

[13238] The sinner from the very circumstance of his being a sinner cannot give for himself such an obedience as God exacts, and still less can he give it for a fellow-sinner. Nor can any other creature of God provide such a righteousness for him—for every creature is required, as for himself, to fulfil the universal law of God; and after he has loved the Lord with all his heart, and discharged every commanded duty, he has not acquired any merit of supererogation which may be carried over to the account of another. Not only so, but it might seem that God Himself were precluded from providing anything to suit the transgressor, and that His inability arose from His very greatness. The righteousness required of man is obedience, and the only righteousness which can be of any use to him must partake of the nature of obedience. But God, as God, the author of the law, the governor of the world,

cannot give obedience. Herein, we repeat, was the difficulty in the way of the restoration of a fallen being. Incapable of redeeming himself, no creature can possibly have any superfluous righteousness to impute to him; and it might seem as if God Himself could not provide what man requires. It is when we consider it in its fitness to solve this difficulty that we discover the manifold wisdom of the "mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." In order to provide such an obedience, one of the persons of the ever-existing and ever-blessed Godhead associates Himself with humanity, and becomes "obedient even unto death," fulfilling the law in its precepts, and submitting to its penalty. How completely does the remedy meet the evil, considered as affecting the government of God! This great truth is set forth in Scripture in very expressive language, in which man is represented as justified by the righteousness of God, that is, in the righteousness which God has provided, and the deliverer is spoken of as "the Lord our righteousness."—*McCosh, D.D.*

[13239] The idea that the personal righteousness of Christ is taken from Him, and given to sinners, so that he loses what they have gained, is so absurd that we have hesitated to put it into writing. To the clear understanding of this subject, it is of the first importance to bear in mind, that when the sacred writers make use of earthly things to shadow forth the heavenly, they so do, not on the ground that the earthly is in all particulars the image of the heavenly—for that it never is—but on the ground of some point of resemblance which is in itself sufficiently marked to warrant the comparison. It is so in this instance. Our Lord is not merely human, but Divine. On this ground His suffering and His righteousness have a value that could not otherwise belong to them. They avail for others, not merely for Himself. Faith in His righteousness includes the seeds of an approval of that righteousness, and of an ultimate conformity to it; and the effect of this faith in it is to give to the believer the legal benefit of it as though it were his own. The point of resemblance here between the earthly and the heavenly is not that the justified believer is really just, as the justified man in a court of law is supposed to be, but that the effect of his relation by faith to the righteousness of Christ is all to him that the absence of conviction is known to be in the other case. Here the identity is complete. Not a full identity; for while the one party is supposed to have been innocent, the other is known to have been an offender; but an identity of result. To the believer, the righteousness of Christ is all in this respect that it would be if it were his own What more natural than that a righteousness thus imputed to him, reckoned to him, viewed as though it were his own, should be spoken of in moments of impassioned thankfulness as though it *were* really his? In the face of law and penalty, it is to him all that it could be even then. So, in his view, the majesty of right in relation to the Divine nature and government is saved, consistently with his pardon, with his justification, and with his restoration to the image and presence of his Maker. And why should this faith be incredible among us? If by the disobedience of one many have been made sinners, why by the obedience of one may not many be made righteous? If by the offence of one judgment has come upon all men to condemnation, why through the righteousness of one may not the free gift come upon all men to justification of life? The great scheme of spiritual restoration, embracing the incarnation, the atonement, and the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, is in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, or it is not. If it be there, then enough is there to warrant a strong impression that we owe those Scriptures to a supernatural inspiration and a supernatural guardianship. If it be not there, and if an elementary sentimental theism is all that should be deduced from those writings, then we say that the manner in which those writers have acquitted themselves as meaning no more than that, is so marvellously inapt as to be fatal to their authority altogether. Our Bible must mean more, much more than that, or it can matter little to us what it may mean. On this ground mere theism will find no permanent halting-place. It must retrace its steps towards orthodoxy, or go further, and become mere naturalism.—*British Quarterly Review.*

[13240] The innate sense of Divine justice, which all men possess, demands that the sinner should receive his due, that the stroke he has given to the law should recoil upon himself. The deeper his sense of guilt, the less can he be satisfied with mere pardon, and the more does he demand punishment, for by punishment he is justified. Whence do we derive his intimate persuasion of God's justice? Not from without; because men, as empirically guided, regard freedom from suffering as the highest good; it must therefore be implanted in our nature by God Himself. The holiness of God, which reveals itself to the sinner by the connection between suffering and transgression, has, therefore, a witness for itself in every human breast. Hence, on the one hand, the proclamation of pardon and reconciliation could not satisfy the conscience of the sinner, unless his guilt had been atoned for by punishment; and, on the other hand, Divine love could not offer its blessing to the sinner unless holiness was revealed together with love. It was therefore necessary that suffering commensurate with the apostasy of man should be endured, which men would impute to themselves as their own. Such was the suffering, inward and outward, of the Redeemer. Two things were necessary: 1. That those sufferings should correspond to the greatness of the sin of mankind; 2. That the sinner could rightfully impute them to himself.—*Tholuck.*

[13241] My soul, be the surety of all such as

trust in the cross, which is indeed a scandal to the unbelievers, but to us is salvation and life eternal!—*St. Ignatius.*

[13242] I have lived to see that this world is made up of perturbations; and I have been long, both preparing to leave it, and gathering comfort for the dreadful hour of making my account with God which I now apprehend to be near. And, though I have, by His grace, loved Him in my youth, and feared Him in mine age, and laboured to have a conscience void of offence to Him and to all men: yet, if thou, O Lord, be extreme to mark what I have done amiss, who can abide it? And, therefore, where I have failed, Lord, show mercy to me: for I plead not my righteousness, but the forgiveness of my unrighteousness, for His merits who died to purchase a pardon for penitent sinners.—*Hooker.*

VI. Its Instrumental Cause.

1 Faith, productive of good works, and a holy life.

(1) "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*" (*Acts* xvi. 31).

[13243] The anxious follower after righteousness is not disappointed by an impracticable code, nor mocked by an unintelligible revelation: the word is near him, therefore accessible; plain and simple, and therefore apprehensible; and, we may fairly add, deals with definite historical fact, and therefore certain: so that his salvation is not contingent on an amount of performance which is beyond him, and therefore inaccessible; irrational, and therefore inapprehensible; undefined, and therefore involved in uncertainty.—*Alford.*

[13244] We cannot save ourselves, but neither will God save us unless we turn to Him to be saved. We must catch at the salvation which He holds out to us, just as a drowning man catches at the rope which is thrown to him from the ship's side; and when we have once grasped the hand or the rope which is held out to us, we are safe; as safe as if we were already in the ship, or on shore. "Ye are saved." This reaching out, then, of faith, in answer to God's stretching out His hand to save us, is the second step which is necessary to be taken in the matter of our salvation. The first step had to be taken by God Himself, and it is we ourselves who have to take the second: "By grace are ye saved through faith." This grace is God's free gift to us; this faith is ours.—*Rev. Henry Harris, B.D.*

[13245] The faith by which we are justified is not a mere assent to the doctrines of the gospel, which leaves the heart unmoved and unaffected by a sense of the evil and danger of sin and the desire of salvation, although it supposes this assent; nor is it that more lively and cordial assent to, and belief in, the doctrine of the gospel, touching our sinful and lost condition, which is wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God, and from which springeth repentance, although this must precede it; nor is it only the assent of the mind to the method by which God justifies the ungodly by faith in the sacrifice of His Son, although this is an element of it; but it is a hearty concurrence of the will and affections with this plan of salvation, which implies a renunciation of every other refuge, and an actual trust in the Saviour, and personal apprehension of His merit; such a belief of the gospel by the power of the Spirit of God as leads us to come to Christ, to receive Christ, to trust Christ, and to commit the keeping of our souls into His hands, in humble confidence of His ability and willingness to save us. This is that qualifying, but not meritorious, condition to which the promise of God annexes justification; that without which justification would not take place; and in this sense it is that we are justified by faith, not by the merit of faith, but by faith instrumentally as this condition; for its connection with the benefit arises from the merits of Christ and the promise of God.—*Edwards.*

[13246] Faith is the condition, not the evidence, of justification. Faith brought to Christ the lame, the blind, and the dying; and "Go in peace" were the Saviour's gracious words; "thy faith hath made thee whole." But the evidence of the cure thus wrought was not the trusting hope which led them to Him, but the buoyant step, the eye kindling into meaning, and the frame invigorated with the glow and pulse of health.—*Bp. Jackson.*

[13247] Faith in Jesus Christ is the preparation for, and condition of, justification: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," says St. Paul, "and thou shalt be saved." Faith is here set before us as the foundation of all gospel righteousness; we must, ere we can become members of Christ's Church, rely upon His word and teaching, and thus faith is necessarily the first step to the kingdom of God. He that cometh unto God must believe "that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Whatever might be the prejudices of education, or of a corrupt state of heart and life, which prevented the Jew or heathen from embracing the Christian religion, it was only through faith they could be overcome; and such faith, then, besides a mere intellectual assent, must also have been a persuasion of heart which enabled him to submit unreservedly to the teaching and requirements of the gospel—the *obedience* of faith. Faith thus implied a preparation of heart, the most difficult though indispensable condition ere the sinner could come to Christ. The healing by our Lord of bodily disease typified the healing of the soul. "Believe ye that I am able to do this?—according to your faith, be it unto you" (Matt. ix. 28, 29). And St. Paul, looking on the cripple at Lystra, saw that he had "faith to be healed" (Acts xiv. 9). Hence we find that although justification is always

represented as a free gift, not to be purchased by man's deservings, yet that faith is the indispensable condition for our receiving it. It would be impossible to imagine how this Divine gift could be otherwise bestowed or received. It was faith only which could open a sinner's eyes to perceive his need of the blessings of redemption, which could enable him to feel his fallen and lost condition by nature, and realize the greatness of a Saviour's love, and could also teach him the need of a change of heart and life, his only means of showing forth gratitude for the mercies of redemption, and his love to Him who has thus loved him, and given Himself for his salvation. Hence repentance is also brought before us as a condition of justification.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13248] The righteousness rests not upon persons possessing a *spasmodic* and *temporary*, but a *present* and *abiding*, faith.—*C. N.*

[13249] It is a childish cavil our adversaries use, exclaiming that we require nothing in Christians but faith, because we say faith alone justifies. Whereas, by this speech, we never meant to exclude hope or charity from being always joined, and inseparable mates with faith, in the man justified; or works from being added, and necessary duties required of every justified man; but to show that faith is the only hand which putteth on Christ unto justification, and Christ the only garment which being put on hides the imperfections of our works, makes us blameless in the sight of God, before whom otherwise the weakness of our faith were sufficient to shut us out of heaven.—*Hooker.*

[13250] Justification is not contingent upon the fact of the transformation of the sinner, as to his immediate actions, into a holy and righteous man; it has its foundation in this—that God now outwardly declares the man righteous without anything new being implanted within the man himself. It consists in this, that the individual is through Christ placed in the true fundamental relation to God, and therefore can be looked upon by God as just. Thus, as Christ is objectively the pure and holy centre of the human race, in whom the Father determines beforehand the future blessedness of mankind, faith is the holy centre within the individual in which the Father determines beforehand his future blessedness in particular (Rom. viii. 1). For faith is like the grain of mustard seed, a small, insignificant, but fructifying seed corn, which contains within it the fulness of a whole future. In His gracious contemplation God beholds in the seed corn the future fruit of blessedness; in the pure will, the realized ideal of freedom.—*Dr. Martensen.*

[13251] It has been said with truth regarding the evangelical doctrine, that although it is rejected by the Romish Church, it nevertheless lives within her pale as a hidden esoteric tradition, and is practically embraced by thousands in place of the outward tradition, which in theory is maintained. Not only have the great teachers of the Middle Age, an Anselm and a Bernard, not only have the host of witnesses who are called the forerunners of the Reformation, given their testimony for this doctrine, but the history of the pastorate, the cure of souls within the Romish Church, abundantly proves that the evangelical doctrine alone can give real comfort to troubled and helpless consciences. Thus it brought peace to Luther, when, as a monk, and experiencing great struggles of conscience, he was referred to Romans iii. by an old Augustinian brother, in proof that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. The evangelical truth is also implied in the old custom of the Romish Church, clearly symbolical, of holding a crucifix before the dying. For what else could this custom mean, except that the man now in the solemn hour of death must rely, not upon his own merits, not upon the merits of the saints, but solely upon the crucified Christ, as the only Mediator?

This crucifix it was that Pius VII., the noblest and most severely tried Pope of modern Church history, pressed to his breast in his dying moments, while with strong words he refused the name "most holy Father," which some one addressed to him. "What!" he exclaimed, "*most holy Father!* I am a poor sinner."—*Ibid.*

[13252] The exclusive instrumentality and peculiar prerogative which is ascribed to faith in connection with our justification is sufficiently established by showing that (1) the only ground of our acceptance with God is the finished work or vicarious righteousness of Christ; and (2) that the only grace whereby we rely or rest upon that ground is faith considered as a cordial belief of the truth concerning Christ, and a confiding trust in Him for our personal salvation.—*J. Buchanan, D.D.* (*condensed*).

[13253] In the office of justifying the believer faith admits no fellowship—none of his acts or qualities, none of his gifts or graces, none of his virtues or deservings of whatever kind—whether concomitants of faith or consequents of it—share with it in this its office; but by faith, and faith *only*, we possess that efficacious interest in Christ's sufferings, and that availing title to the fruits of His obedience, which shield us from the curse of the law, and secure to us its blessings and its rewards.—*Bp. O'Brien.*

[13254] If you were permitted to purchase eternal salvation, what would you not give for it! And now you may obtain it by faith and love; there is nothing can hinder you from acquiring it—neither poverty, nor misery, nor old age, nor any state of life. Believe, therefore, in one God, who is God and Man, and receive eternal salvation for a recompense.—*St. Clement of Alexandria.*

[13255] Oh, how unlike the complex works of man,
Heaven's easy, artless, unincumber'd plan!
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clust'ring ornaments to clog the pile:
From ostentation as from weakness free,
It stands like the cerulean arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity.
Inscrib'd above the portal, from afar
Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
Legible only by the light they give,
Stand the soul-quick'ning words—"*Believe and live.*"—*Cowper.*

(2) "*As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*" (*James* ii. 26).

[13256] There are many whose eyes are so wide open to the mistake of attempting to become their own saviours, that they fall unawares into a mistake in the opposite direction. They see most clearly how hopeless it is to seek to win heaven by their own exertions; they fully realize the fact that it is God which works in them both to will and to do of His own good pleasure; but they see no further. And so they come to the conclusion that they have nothing to do but to sit still until God comes and saves them. But as for working out their own salvation, and working at it with fear and trembling, such a notion never once crosses their minds, or disturbs the easy repose in which they are lying. —*Rev. Henry Harris, B.D.*

[13257] "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. ii. 13). Is the master satisfied with the servants who are well instructed in their duties, but who neglect their performance? Does society smile approvingly upon persons who are thoroughly versed in all the rules of etiquette, and yet conduct themselves worse than the uninitiated? Would a sovereign extend his hand graciously to that law officer whose duty was to codify the law, and who, although he might descant upon its value and excellence, habitually disregarded its letter and spirit in his own daily life? And how preposterous of the Jews, then, to imagine, because they had entrusted to them the Divine law, had been taught it from their youth, heard it read every Sabbath day in their synagogues, gloried in its possession, that therefore they should be accounted righteous although they had failed to keep the commandments of the Lord their God! —*C. N.*

[13258] The Scriptures expressly declare that good works are required as a condition for our continuance in a state of justification, and the attainment of eternal life. Good works are necessarily the fruits of a true and living faith. . . . Our Lord's declaration is most emphatic: "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire" (Matt. vii. 19). The man who heareth His sayings and doeth them is compared to one who built his house upon a rock, against which the floods and storms beat in vain; but he who heareth His sayings and doeth them not is compared to a man who, without a foundation, built his house on the sand, which was overthrown, and great was the fall thereof (Matt. vii. 24–27). And from His account of the Day of Judgment we know that they who have done certain good works—cited in illustration of Christian duties generally—will go into life everlasting; and they who have left them undone will be cast into everlasting fire (Matt. xxv. 31–46). . . . Justification by works, either as preserving us in a state of acceptance with God, or as the title to an eternal reward, has been supposed to imply, in an unscriptural sense, the *meritorious acts* of good works, as if the faithful Christian had thus a strict claim or title to eternal happiness; but this inference is a mistaken one. The Christian is only *entitled* to future happiness on account of God's promises; for we know that He is faithful who hath promised. The term "merit" applied to good works is unobjectionable if rightly understood. . . . They can only be done through grace and faith in Christ; and God accounts the fruits of His gifts of grace as being *our own* merit or deserving. . . . Thus justification by works . . . neither teaches us to rely upon them in disparagement of Divine grace, nor as claiming a reward from God.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13259] St. Paul speaks (in Romans ii. 7) of 'patient continuance in *well-doing*," literally "good work," and it refers to the Christian career as a *life-long work*. A *chef d'œuvre* is only produced by a painter after years of labour and pains. It is made up of a number of little strokes of the brush, which in themselves seem of small account. If the artist after a while were to grow weary of his task, and careless in the execution of his glorious conception, the picture would be a failure, notwithstanding all the diligence previously bestowed on his undertaking. Now, a Christian life is made up of a number of small duties and acts of kindness rather than of extraordinary exploits; and these must be quietly attended to unto the end if he is to be "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. ii. 21) — *C. N.*

[13260] God made us, and not we ourselves; He put us together just as a workman puts a piece of machinery together, piece by piece, and we have no more ground for boasting or making a merit of what we do, than a clock has ground for boasting of being able to point to the time, or to strike the hours. We are simply, then, a piece of workmanship, designed and put together by God. Still, a piece of machinery is designed for some set purpose or other, and so are we; we have been made and made over again, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Yes, not only has God made us to do a particular kind of work, but, in addition

to this, He has got the very works themselves ready beforehand which we are to do; the works which we are to do are all of God's own making, just as we ourselves are, who are to do them. And so, from first to last, the whole process is entirely God's, and we have nothing to do with making any part of it; it is all God's. —*Rev. Henry Harris, B.D.*

[13261] With regard to the commonly alleged distinction between the being saved for, or on account of, our works, and the being saved accordingly to them. "It is one thing," observes Gregory, "to be rewarded *secundum*, or according to our works; and another thing to be rewarded *propter*, or on account of them. In using the word *secundum* we mean to denote the quality or character of the works, not to imply how much they deserve. For no works or endeavours of man can enter into comparison with their glorious recompense in heaven." This last position is true; but the *propter opera* may not be the less a very proper expression, unless it be understood to signify, which it does not signify, something of equivalence, or something which excludes bounty or grace. Wesley states the case as follows: "As to merit itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid, we are rewarded according to our works; yea because of our works. How does this differ from for the sake of our works? How differs this from *secundum merita operum?* which is no more than as our works deserve. Can you split this hair? I doubt I cannot."—*Rev. John Penrose, M.A.*

[13262] Having shown a child the operation of grafting, and pointing at the crab-tree newly grafted, "My dear child," would I say, "though hitherto this tree has produced nothing but crabs, yet, by the skill of the gardener, who has just fixed in it that good little branch, it is now made an apple-tree; I justify and warrant it such." (Here is an emblem of our first justification by faith!) "In three or four years, if we live, we will come again and see it: if it thrives and bears fruit, well; we shall then, by that mark, justify it a second time; we shall declare that it is a good apple-tree indeed, and fit to be transplanted from this wild nursery into a delightful orchard. But if we find that the old crab-stock, instead of nourishing the graft, spends all its sap in producing wild shoots and sour crabs; or, if it is a 'tree whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead' (dead in the graft and in the stock), 'plucked up by the root,' or quite cankered, far from declaring it a good tree, we shall pass sentence of condemnation upon it, and say, 'Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? For every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.'" Here is an emblem of our second justification by works, or of the condemnation that will infallibly overtake those Laodicean professors and wretched apostates, whose faith is not shown by works, where there is time and opportunity.—*Fletcher.*

[13263] All writers worth attending to rank works of usefulness and charity as among the effects of Christian faith. Query, Are all writers equally and sufficiently careful to rank them also among the means of nursing up, and establishing, the Christian character? These works, if proceeding from a good, though it may yet be an imperfect principle (as in the case of the young ruler spoken of in Luke xviii.), are a part of the education of faith, as well as among the fruits of that faith when formed or created, and tend at once to secure the health of the soul, and strengthen its energy.—*Rev. John Penrose, M.A.*

(3) "*Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.*"

[13264] Remember, a holy calling never saved any man without a holy heart; if our tongues only be sanctified, our whole man must be damned.—*Flavel.*

[13265] Without holiness, there can be no such heaven as the New Testament reveals. There may be scenery of surpassing grandeur—mountains, woods, rivers, and skies most charming; but they do not make a heaven, else a heaven might be found in Wales or Cumberland. There may be a capital full of palaces and temples; but they do not make a heaven, else a heaven might have been found in Delhi. There may be buildings of marble and precious stones; but they do not make a heaven, else a heaven might have been in Rome or Venice. There may be health and ease and luxury and festivities; but they do not make a heaven, else one would have been met with in Belshazzar's halls. There may be education, philosophy, poetry, literature, art; but that will not make a heaven, else the Greeks would have had one in Athens, in the grove and in the porch. Holiness is that without which no heaven could exist.—*J. Stoughton.*

[13266] How many persons put off the evil hour, when they think that of necessity they will be constrained to surrender their hearts to God! There is a sort of inward feeling that the time must come, but the later it comes the better. Let us live on as long as ever we can, pleasing ourselves, following our own natural inclinations, running after our own desires, taking the law of our life into our own hand; and, when we cannot do this any longer, when Divine Justice confronts us, when we see the sword drawn, when we find ourselves trembling on the brink of doom, when heart and flesh are failing us, when the earth is rolling away from under our feet, then, in the hour of our emergency, we will turn round and cry to God to save our souls from impending ruin.—*Rev. W. Hay M. H. Aitken.*

[13267] What is called salvation is not, as some virtually represent, a sort of magical metamorphosis of state, having its chief significance in safety already secured and a title to something better hereafter; but emancipation from the tyranny of sin, or the formation of a

character in purity and benevolence like God's. All beyond this, or what necessarily flows from it, is for the most part the invention of divines, sanctioned neither by reason nor Scripture. A man is saved just so far as he is made holy, and no farther; and enters the future world with prospects of well-being exactly in proportion to the extent of spiritual renovation or moral excellence with which he leaves the present; nor is it easy to conceive of a more noxious perversion of Christianity than the theory which depicts its most prominent characteristic as a thing done for us nearly two thousand years ago, instead of a thing to be done in us every day and moment of our lives. Rightly viewed, the utterance were most true, that there is no other heaven or hell, here or hereafter, but what is created by a man's own nature, or as much an outgrowth from it as the efflorescence of a plant from its germs.—*W. B. Clulow.*

[13268] The life of Jesus was absolutely perfect, and the everlasting Father gives this attestation to it, and Simon Peter and James and John heard Him say, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him." Let that life speak; let that perfect life which is in continual obedience to the perfect will of the perfect God—let that life speak, "hear ye Him!" hear His unwavering obedience, hear His filial love, hear His constant self-denial, hear His renunciation of the world, hear His spotless purity: let this life speak, and tell what God's ideal of perfection is; it has spoken, and it speaks still.—*Rev. W. Hay M. H. Aitken.*

[13269] The condition of justification under the law is perfect obedience. If we obey the law perfectly, we satisfy its requirements, and can appeal to it for justification; if we disobey, we are convicted by the law as transgressors. The reward is promised only to those who continue in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them; these it justifies, but those who disobey it condemns (Rom. x. 5, ii. 13). This is essential to the very nature of law, and is true of every law. A law may promise rewards to those who obey, but it certainly denounces punishment against those who disobey. It would destroy itself were it delivered in these terms: You are commanded to obey, but you will be forgiven if you transgress. And hence when the self-righteous lawyer in the Gospel asked our Saviour on what conditions eternal life is bestowed, our Lord replied, "Keep the commandments."—*Paton J. Gloag, D.D.*

[13270] While this scheme of justification strips man of all pretensions to merit, and gives the whole glory of his salvation to his Maker, it furnishes the most efficacious means, and the most absolute assurance of his future obedience, his perpetual improvement in holiness, and his certain advancement toward the best character which he will ever be capable of sustaining. The obedience springing from faith is voluntary, filial, and lovely; whilst all other obedience is mercenary, and of no moral worth.—*T. Dwight, LL.D.*

["Be ye holy, even as I am holy," is an ever binding injunction, and no *inward* faith can be genuine which does not realize the necessity of its *outward* manifestation.—*A. M. A. W.*]

VII. Its Relation to Sanctification.

[13271] Speaking of the contest between the Reformers and their opponents, whether the word "justification" meant a change in God or a change in man; an accounting just on God's part, or a becoming just on man's, we say, "May not the solution be, that the idea of justification, like the idea of reconciliation, is a reciprocal idea, involving both sides of one and the same truth? For what is this truth? That in the gospel there is revealed a righteousness of God—that is, a Divine gift of righteousness, a righteousness not of man's making, but of God's giving (Rom. i. 17). And what is the essential meaning of this word 'righteousness' (δικαιοσύνη)? It is a right relation, either between man and man (as used by Aristotle), or between God and man (as used by St. Paul). Man had no power to put himself into this 'right relation' to God: Christ did it. It was the gift of God. Christ's propitiation established a 'right relation' between God and man; and this is what St. Paul means by δικ ιοσύνη Θεοῦ. The man who by God's grace is restored to this right relation to God is said to be δικαιωθείς, justified. And God's act in restoring man to this right relation is termed δικαίωσις, justification. If this be a true account of the word 'justification,' then we perceive at once the clear distinction between justification and sanctification. Justification is that establishment of a right relation between God and man, which was effected once for all by Christ's death, and which may be apprehended once for all by faith. Sanctification is that growth in holiness through the influence of the Holy Spirit, which must surely, though it may be slowly, follow justification."—*U. R. T.*

[13272] The Papal system, while it recognizes the great facts of the mediatorial scheme, as lying at the foundation of the economy of mercy and salvation, confounds justification with sanctification, by making it to result from grace infused, instead of referring it entirely to the work and sacrifice of Christ appropriated by faith. Thus it sets aside the emphatic statement of St. Paul: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." The theology of Rome, also, presents to us a complete and perfect scheme of sacramental salvation, and teaches that all sins committed after baptism can only be remitted through sacramental confession and absolution; while the gospel of Christ lays open the mercy-seat of God as accessible to every burdened spirit, and holds forth to it the promise of conscious ac

ceptance upon its personal trust in the crucified one.—*London Quarterly Review.*

[13273] 1. They differ in their *nature;* justification is a change upon our condition with respect to law; sanctification is a change upon our moral character. 2. In their *order*, justification precedes sanctification. 3. Justification is at once perfect: the believer's sins are pardoned, he is freed from condemnation, he receives a title to eternal life. Sanctification is imperfect, a work begun and in progress.—*Paton J. Gloag, D.D.*, 1856.

[13274] It may serve to extricate some minds from confusion if we give an axiomatic statement of the nature and relation of the two blessings in question. Justification and sanctification agree in the following points: they are both *essential* to our salvation from the state into which we are fallen, and from the dangers to which we are exposed. Both are sovereign favours, bestowed on us by the God of salvation. Both come to us through the redemption that is in Christ. In both the operation of the Holy Spirit applies the work of Christ. Both are designed to honour the law and government and grace of God. Both are, therefore, enjoyed by all believers, and by believers only. But the two blessings differ in various ways. Justification is specially related to the rectitude of God's government; sanctification relates to the holiness of God's nature. Justification is an act; sanctification is a process. Justification is the sentence of the Father as moral Governor on the throne of grace; sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit in the temple of the heart. Justification changes our state; sanctification is a change of our nature or character. In justification we are pronounced righteous; by sanctification we are made holy. Justification is the acceptance of our persons into God's favour; sanctification is the renewal of our hearts into God's image. Justification, therefore, is a forensic term, expressive of God's jurisdiction over us; sanctification is catharistic, expressing God's moral influence over us. In justification the guilt of sin is remitted; in sanctification its defilement is cleansed. Justification gives a title to heaven; sanctification a fitness for it. Justification is by union to Christ as the law Fulfiller; sanctification by union to Him as the Purifier. Justification comes by uniting us to Christ as our legal Head; sanctification by uniting us to Him as our vital Head. Justification is by faith only on our part; sanctification is by many means, chiefly the Word and prayer, but also by ordinances and afflictions, under the influence of the Spirit. Justification is complete as soon as we believe; sanctification then commences amid great imperfections. Justification may be referred to a known definite time; sanctification is spread over the whole of life. In justification there is no difference among believers; in sanctification there are great varieties. Justification comes first as the root; sanctification follows as the fruit. Justification, therefore, may be known by sanctification. Justification pronouncing our title to the enjoyment of heaven; sanctification is given to fulfil the sentence. Many more points of distinction might be shown; but these may suffice to assist such as wish to pursue the subject to greater lengths.—*Dr. Bennett.*

[13275] The evidence of man's justification is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart, discernible (as alone the presence of the invisible Sanctifier can be discerned) by repentance, faith, and love, and growth in holiness. And if we would have a reasonable hope that our sins are blotted out in the Saviour's blood, the sentence against us cancelled, and the light of God's countenance beaming upon us in love, we must read the blessed truth in our growing hatred of sin, our increasing conformity to the example of Christ, and our strengthening habits of devotion, self-denial, purity, humility, and charity. Sanctification, as it always accompanies, becomes the outward manifestation of our justification; God's seal on those who are His.—*Bp. Jackson.*

[13276] Justification is a forensic or judicial act, by which the sinner is pronounced just on the ground of a righteousness which is not subjectively his, and which therefore does not constitute his character. Sanctification is an efficient or executive work, in which God, by the power of His Spirit, renovates the corrupted nature of man, and restores him to his own image in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.—*Dr. Hodge.*

[13277] The error of the Romish Church is to confound justification and sanctification. So the Council of Trent declares, that "justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification of the inner man; and that the only formal cause of justification is the righteousness of God, not that whereby He is just, but what by which He makes us just;" that is, inherently so. That justification and sanctification go together, we have seen; but this is not what is meant by the Council. Their doctrine is, that man is made just or holy, and then justified. The answer to this is that God "justifieth the ungodly;" and the Scriptures plainly mean by justification, not sanctification, but simply the remission of sin.—*R. Watson.*

VIII. Question as to the Time of Justification.

[13278] As to the time of justification, divines are not agreed. Some have distinguished it into decretive, virtual, and actual. (1) Decretive is God's eternal purpose to justify sinners in time by Jesus Christ. (2) Virtual justification has a reference to the satisfaction made by Christ. (3) Actual is when we are enabled to believe in Christ, and by faith are united to Him. Others say that it is eternal, because His purpose respecting it was from everlasting;

and that, as the Almighty viewed His people in Christ, they were, consequently, justified in His sight. But the principle on which the advocates for this doctrine have proceeded is most absurd. They have confounded the design with the execution; for if this distinction be not kept up, the utmost perplexity will follow the consideration of every subject which relates to the decrees of God; nor shall we be able to form any clear ideas of His moral government whatever. To say, as one does, that the eternal will of God to justify men is the justification of them, is not to the purpose; for, upon the same ground, we might as well say that the eternal will of God to convert and glorify this people is the real conversion and glorification of them. That it was eternally determined that there should be a people who should believe in Christ, and that His righteousness should be imputed to them, is not to be disputed; but to say that these things were really done from eternity (which we must say if we believe eternal justification), this would be absurd. It is more consistent to believe that God from eternity laid the plan of justification; that this plan was executed by the life and death of Christ; and that the blessing is only manifested, received, and enjoyed, when we are regenerated, so that no man can say, or has any reason to conclude, he is justified until he believes in Christ.—*Edwards.*

IX. The Accordance between the Teaching of St. Paul and the Early Fathers.

[13279] The teaching of the fathers was in exact accordance with the doctrine of Paul. The most illustrious of them have left behind the clearest and fullest testimony on the subject. "God gave His only Son," says Justin Martyr, "a ransom for us—the Holy One for the transgressors, the innocent for the wicked; the righteous for the unrighteous. . . . For what else could cover our sins but His righteousness? In whom could we transgressors and ungodly be justified but in the Son of God? O sweet exchange! O unsearchable contrivance! that the transgressions of many should be hidden in one righteous Person, and the righteousness of One should justify many transgressors!" (Epist. ad. Diog.) To the same effect, in his commentary on 2 Cor. v. 21, Chrysostom: "What word, what speech is this? What mind can comprehend or express it? For he saith He made Him who was righteous to be made a sinner that He might make sinners righteous. Nay, this is not what he says, but something greater. He does not say He made Him a sinner, but sin; that we might be made, not righteous, but righteousness, and that the righteousness of God" (cap. v. Hom. ii.) These testimonies might be multiplied to almost any extent. (See Sincer's "Thesaurus.") —*Rev. Robert Frew, D.D.*

[13280] "His faith was accounted for righteousness." He speaketh this because, without the works of the law to every sinner, that is, to every Gentile that believeth in Christ, his faith is counted to him for righteousness, as it was to Abraham. How, therefore, can the Jews think to be justified by the works of the law, and yet as Abraham was justified, when they see that Abraham was not justified by the works of the law, but by faith only?—*St. Ambrose.*

X. The Teaching of St. Paul and St. James Reconciled.

[13281] The true key to the difficult passage in the Apostle James's Epistle (chap. ii. 14-26), and the true theory of reconciliation between Paul and James seems to lie in the different point of view from which the two apostles regard the subject. Paul is dealing in his Epistles with those who insisted upon justification by works, James with such as dispensed with works altogether . . . and clung to a dead inoperative faith. . . . It is true he asserts that "Abraham was *justified by works*," and that a "man is justified by works and not by faith only." But the meaning obviously is . . . that Abraham, and all of like faith with him, are justified by a faith which is productive of good works. . . . They both treat of one and the same thing, viz., gospel justification, but with a different object in view, and both together teach us that while justification is by faith alone, the faith which justifies abideth not alone, but is followed by all acts of holy obedience.—*Rev. Robert Frew, D.D.*

[13282] The Apostle (St. Paul) by justification by faith meant no more than that either we are justified in an evangelical way, or more particularly by faith intended a practical belief, including evangelical obedience; and seeing, on the other hand, St. James, in affirming "that we are justified by works and not by faith only;" by works means no more than evangelical obedience, in opposition to a naked and an empty faith; these two, so far from quarrelling, mutually embrace each other, and both, in the main, pursue the same design; and indeed if any derangement seem between them, it is most reasonable that St. Paul should be expounded by St. James, not only because his proportions are so express and positive and not justly liable to ambiguity, but because he wrote some competent time after the other; and consequently as he perfectly understood his meaning, so he was capable to countermine those ill principles which some men had built upon St. Paul's assertions. For it is evident from several passages in St. Paul's Epistles that even then many began to mistake his doctrine, and from his assertions about justification by faith, and not by works, to infer propositions that might serve the purpose of a bad life (see Rom. iii. 8, vi. 1). . . . Against these men it is beyond all question plain that St. James levels his Epistle to batter down the growing doctrines of libertinism and profaneness; to show the insuffi-

ciency of a naked faith, and an empty profession of religion, that it is not enough to recommend us to the Divine acceptance, and to justify us in the sight of heaven, barely to believe the gospel, unless we really obey and practise it; that a faith destitute of this evangelical obedience is fruitless and unprofitable to salvation; that it is by these works that faith must appear to be vital and sincere. . . . St. James's meaning, in short, is nothing else than that good works, or evangelical obedience, is, according to the Divine appointment, the condition of the gospel covenant, without which it is in vain for any to hope for that pardon which Christ hath purchased, and the favour of God, which is necessary for eternal life.—*Dr. Cowe.*

[13283] The justification of which Paul speaks is that of a sinner before God. James speaks of the justification of a professed believer before men. Paul therefore says his justification is by faith, without works; James says that his justification is by works, which are to prove that faith exists. Paul treats only of justification at the tribunal of Him that can see our faith; James speaks of a tribunal at which our faith cannot be seen, unless we show it by works. Paul's justification is before the Omniscient, by a principle invisible to men, which therefore must produce works to justify us before the Church and the world; James treats of this last justification by those very works which are to prove we had the living faith.—*Dr. Bennet.*

[13284] The one declares that nothing renders us acceptable to God but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; the other, that such a faith, when true and genuine, is not solitary, but accompanied with every good work. The one speaks of the justification of our persons; this is by faith only: the other, of the justification of our profession; and this is by faith also, but not alone, for it works by love, and produces obedience.—*J. Newton*, 1725-1807.

[13285] Both St. Paul and St. James treat of the same truth, but in opposite aspects. St. Paul is treating of God's dealing in the justification of a sinner; St. James, of God's dealings with a believer justified. St. Paul speaks of the first step in the believer's life; St. James, of the subsequent steps. St. Paul deals with the ground of justification; St. James, with the evidence. St. Paul writes of faith as the life of communion, which is inconceivable without fruit; St. James, of faith as an intellectual assent, which may exist without any influence on the life. St. Paul is writing with a view to the Judaizing zealots who would make works a ground of justification; St. James, with a view to antinomian professors, who would disparage the necessity for good works. St. Paul argues from the internal to the external; St. James, from the external to the internal. St. Paul, from the centre to the circumference; St. James, from the circumference to the centre.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13286] Whatever the apostle asserts of works must be applicable alike to all conditions and stages of the evangelical state, from Rahab to Abraham; for he adduces examples from each of them. It is not thus that the apostles should be harmonized. It is clear, I think, that St. James is so far from denying that faith only justifies that he avowedly takes it for granted—for he says expressly, at the very moment that he adduces the works of Abraham as proofs of his faith, and as perfecting it, "and the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it—that is, his faith—was imputed to him for righteousness," and this, to the very terms used, is St. Paul's conclusion. He is contrasting what certain insincere brethren called faith—the barren belief, without any life in it, such as is the faith of devils—with faith really and truly so. The apostle knows nothing of the *fides informis* and the *fides formata*, which is a scholastic figment of which Scripture has not a trace—he compares real faith with what hypocrites called by the same name, but which was not faith but something else; and he is describing the manner in which the sincerity of their profession may be tested: "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works—show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."—*Canon Garbett*, 1842.

[13287] It may be urged, indeed, that St. James refers to one instance of faith manifesting itself in obedience, which St. Paul passes over, alleging it as a proof that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. But this only makes St. Paul's choice of the instances he has chosen, and his silence as to the others, the more marked. St. Paul had one object in view, and he chose those instances which bore upon his object. St. James had a different object, and he chose those which bore upon his. The instances which St. Paul chose were precisely such as served to show that we are justified by faith without works, so far as the ground of our acceptance with God is concerned; those which St. James chose were precisely such as served to show that, though we are justified by faith, yet it is not by a faith which is barren and unproductive, but which shows itself, when time and opportunity are given, in actual righteousness.—*C. A. Heurtley, B.D.*, 1845.

XI. The Articles of the Church of England on Justification.

[13288] The 11th Article of the Church of England declares that justification by faith only is "a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." The 12th Article speaks of good works as "the necessary fruits of true faith," but expressly adds regarding them that "they manifestly cannot combine with it in the work of our justification; for, springing from it, they follow *after justification*." The homily to which reference is made in the 11th Article is most emphatic in its statement of the truth: "St. Paul declareth

nothing upon the behalf of man concerning his justification, but only a true and lively faith. And yet that faith doth not shut out repentance, hope, love, dread, and the fear of God in every man that is justified ; but it shutteth them out from the office of justifying. So that, although they be all present in him that is justified, they justify not altogether."—*Rev. Robert Frew, D.D.*

[13289] This 11th Article of our faith is most appropriately followed by another which avowedly treats "of good works" (the 12th), and whose teaching is to this effect : "Albeit that good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment ; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit."

It is hardly necessary to remark on the above plain statements that they are in exact accordance with, indeed the very echo of the inspired will of God, and point out to us the precise place, in the scheme of redemption, which good works occupy—related as they are to our faith, if it be genuine, as its fruit is to the living and wholesome tree.

Precisely the same is the teaching of another of our Articles, the 17th, often misunderstood, but, like the rest which accompany it, speaking the very language and breathing the spirit of Holy Scripture. In this the salvation of all who believe is traced, as the Word of God traces it, to "the everlasting purpose of God," "to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ," not, be it observed, intruding into unrevealed depths, such as that involved in the doctrine of reprobation, to which some, as we believe unscripturally, urge such considerations, yet resolving all into the undeserved and sovereign "grace of God which bringeth salvation." But if the line of thought in this statement be pursued, it will be found to issue in the same practical assertion of the necessity of holiness as that laid down in the Articles already quoted, thus : "Wherefore they which He endued with so excellent a benefit of God He called according to God's purpose by His Spirit working in due season ; they through grace obey the calling ; they be justified freely ; they be made the sons of God by adoption ; they be made like the image of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ ; they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity." —*Rev. Wm. MacIlwaine, A.M.*

[13290] Every Churchman will acknowledge Bishop Bull to be a *clarum et venerabile nomen.* Yet, when he maintains that sanctification precedes justification, I cannot understand how such a view is reconcilable with that taken by the Church of England, inasmuch as her Articles directly reverse the order asserted by the Bishop, and make justification precede sanctification.

According to the 13th Article, works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of His Spirit are not pleasant to God ; while, on the contrary, good works, which are the fruits of faith and follow after justification, are pleasing and acceptable to God through Christ.

Now, agreeably to the tenor of these definitions, if sanctification precede justification, then the congeries of holy dispositions and holy works, which are comprehended under the term sanctification, cannot be pleasant to God ; because, in that case, sanctification is a complex act done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of His Spirit.

But, on the other hand, if sanctification succeed justification, then the arrangement will perfectly harmonize with the arrangement proposed by the Anglican Church ; because, in that arrangement, good works, which are the fruits of faith, and which follow after justification, are pleasing and acceptable to God through Christ. —*Faber.*

[13291] Save on the ground of the expiatory sacrifice and perfect righteousness of Christ our Saviour both God and man, we assuredly can prefer no claim to everlasting felicity ; but still, since, on moral grounds, it is impossible for the natural man to enter into heaven, because heaven itself would be no heaven to those who had not been sanctified by the Spirit, there must also, for that purpose, in addition to a well established claim, be, what the apostle calls, a meetness to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light. These two, the right and the qualification, must be ever conjoined in practice and ever disjoined in office. When the Church of England denies to the inherent righteousness of sanctification the office of justifying, she no more undervalues it in its proper place, and no more decries a holy and religious life as a requisite qualification for heaven, than a man could be said to decry and undervalue an article of raiment as a matter quite unessential, because he strenuously, and perhaps not unreasonably, denied to it the office of nourishing. It is truly marvellous what difficulty some persons seem to have in understanding this very plain and very simple matter.—*Ibid.*

XII. Importance of the Doctrine.

[13292] Justification is a capital article of that faith which was once delivered to the saints. Far from being a mere speculative point, it spreads its vital influence through the whole body of theology, runs through all Christian experience, and operates in every part of practical godliness. Such is its grand importance, that a mistake about it has a malignant efficacy, and is attended with a long train of disastrous consequences. Nor can this appear strange when it is considered that the doctrine of justification is no other than the way of a sinner's acceptance with God. Being of such

peculiar moment, it is inseparably connected with many other evangelical truths, the harmony and beauty of which we cannot behold while this is misunderstood. It is, if anything may be so called, an essential and fundamental truth of Christianity ; and as our very salvation depends on it through eternity, it deserves and demands our most serious consideration.—*Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge.*

XIII. Homiletical Remarks.

[13293] The right knowledge of this doctrine is a source of abiding joy ; it likewise animates love, zeal, gratitude, and all the noblest powers of the soul, and produces a habit of cheerful and successful obedience to the whole will of God. But it may be, and too often is, misunderstood and abused. If you receive it by Divine teaching, it will fill you with those fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God (Phil. i. 11). But if you learn it only from men and books, if you are content with the notion of it in your head, instead of the powerful experience of it in your heart, it will have a contrary effect. Such a lifeless form, even of the truth itself, will probably make you heady and high-minded, censorious of others, trifling in your spirit, and unsettled in your conduct. Oh ! be afraid of resembling the foolish virgins (Matt. xxv. 1–12), of having the lamp of your profession expire in darkness for want of the oil of grace ; lest, when the bridegroom cometh, you should find the door shut against you.—*J. Newton*, 1725–1807.

[13294] Practical workers among men find this doctrine "most wholesome." It bears the brunt of rough contact with sin and misery. It lives and works in the atmosphere of the lane, the hovel, and the dungeon, as well as that of the quiet study and the curtained drawing-room. Whatever evidence of its truth it may have or may lack, it has at all events the evidence of being proved to work well. Whatever tests it may stand or fail under, it stands the test of trial and experience. No doubt the doctrine may be abused. Self-deceit and hypocrisy may use it as a shelter. Soft and easy livers may satisfy their conscience with the plea that, though doing no work, they are justified by faith. Men-pleasing preachers may gain credit for orthodox declaration of the doctrine, while crying "Peace, peace, where there is no peace." But as long as there are passions which require the force of enthusiasm to curb them—as long as there are wretched lives which want good news to cheer them—as long as there are guilty consciences which need a message of forgiveness to give them hope—as long as there are low selfish tendencies which require some heavenly influence to elevate them—so long we cannot do without that plain enunciation of Christ's gospel which is contained in the doctrine of "justification by faith."—*F. R. Wynne.*

[For Act of God the Father in the Bestowal of the Son, see Division E , viii.]

PART IV.

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION D.

THE WORK AND OFFICE OF GOD THE SON IN REDEMPTION.

[1] The Holy Incarnation.

SYLLABUS.

		PAGE
I.	Definition and Significance of the Incarnation...	491
II.	Manner of the Miraculous Conception	494
III.	The Indissoluble Union between the Divine and the Human Nature	497
IV.	The Appropriateness of Time as Regards the Divine Nativity	504
V.	The Power of its Manifestation	505
VI.	Its Grand Purpose and Design	506
VII.	Its Representativeness	507
VIII.	Its Relations	507
IX.	Its Necessity to Human Nature	508
X.	Its Demonstrations...	510
XI.	Its Benefits	512
XII.	Place of the Doctrine in the Christian Scheme	513
XIII.	Apologetic Value and Importance of the Doctrine	513
XIV.	Question raised on the Subject: Was the Incarnation Necessary Apart from the Existence of Sin?	514
XV.	False or Pretended Incarnations of Heathen Religions	518
XVI.	Homiletical Remarks	518

RESTORATION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(*Continued*).

DIVISION D.

THE WORK AND OFFICE OF GOD THE SON IN REDEMPTION.

1

THE HOLY INCARNATION.

I. Definition and Significance of the Incarnation.

1 **The assumption of human nature by the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.**

[13295] The word expresses in a short form the fact stated in John i. 14, *Verbum caro factum est*, and is doubtless founded on the form of that statement. Its use can be traced back as far as the writings of Irenæus (A.D. 180), and to that still earlier summary of the creed which he embodies in them. . . . The Nicene Creed and the writings of the fathers gave the term a permanent place in Latin theology and in Divine service, and it is also found in all the Western forms of the Litany. In the earliest English "*incarnatus est*" was translated "*wearth geflæschamod*," or "*iflæschamod*," but the Litany obsecration, "by the mystery of Thy Holy Incarnation," and the present form of the word in the Nicene Creed, were introduced a few years before the English Prayer Book was set forth, and the word was freely used in the time of Hooker.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13296] The classical text of John i. 14 defines generally the Incarnation: "The Word was made flesh." Our Lord assumed human nature. He who was God entered to the uttermost into human conditions. He who was in the beginning, who was with God, and was God, was made of a woman, and partook of flesh and blood. The Divine person of the Son became man—entered into union with humanity—and possessed a body that was not a mere form or appearance, but real, veritable, corporeal. The Divine and human natures, however, though united, were not blended, but remained properly and permanently distinct. Each nature retained its own attributes and characteristics, and in their unity constituted one person. The union was absolute and real, and not temporary or nominal; and it was not the man Christ Jesus who slept, or suffered, or hungered, or died, but the God-man. His Deity remained as pure and unmodified as if it had never condescended to the human estate, and His humanity remained as genuine and unchanged as if no superior nature had been in connection with it.—*John Baird, D.D.*

[13297] The Eternal Word made flesh (John i. 14). Not the nature of angels. How could angels suffer, die, or have taken our place in fulfilling the moral law? Not the nature of man as originally created. Not the nature of man as now born by ordinary generation, with a sinful nature. Not the glorified humanity, as now on the throne, for ever exempted from all frailty and infirmity. But a perfect manhood. Christ was perfect man, "the likeness of sinful flesh, yet without sin; and was perfect man without ceasing to be God" (Rom. viii. 2; Heb. iv. 15). Christ became Immanuel, possessing the twofold nature in one person. Christ took not a human personality, but human nature.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13298] It is very important to understand rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the controversies of the early Church four principal words were employed to express the truth. *True.* Christ took a real human body, not one in *appearance* only, as some taught. He did not assume one for a time, as the angels sometimes did. *Perfect.* Christ possessed both natures, perfect Divinity and perfect Humanity, in one person. *Distinct.* He possessed the two natures, but without mingling or confounding the substance. *Indivisible.* The two natures Christ took are never to be divided.—*Ibid.*

[13299] Human nature having been assumed by Christ, it is to be understood that it was assumed entire. The body of Christ was not a phantom as the Gnostics and the Docetæ maintained, but a true body, like the ordinary bodies of men. His soul was not identical with the Divine Word as was believed by the Apollinarians, but a "reasonable soul," capable of willing, thinking, and actuating as are the ordinary souls of men. Neither, again, did our

Lord's human nature come down ready formed from heaven, as was the opinion of the Valentinians, but was formed of the substance of His mother, of "human flesh subsisting."—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13300] The Incarnate Word was "perfect man" as well as "perfect God." He was capable of enduring in His body all sufferings of which human bodies are capable, and in His soul all emotions which can be felt by human souls. Hunger, thirst, fatigue, pain, weeping, were all within the range of His possible and actual experience in the body, as sorrow, pity, love, and joy were among the experiences of His soul. It was only where the defects of our human nature are, those that are specially associated with personal imperfection and sin, that a line of distinction came to be drawn between Christ and mankind in general. He assumed the capacity for bodily pain and for death, but not for disease; He assumed capacity for mental suffering, but not for sin. His conception was perfectly immaculate, because He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and as He thus took human nature without any taint of original sin, so that human nature continued utterly sinless, in perfect union and communion with God.—*Ibid.*

[13301] Majesty took upon itself humility; strength, weakness; eternity, mortality, without impairing the properties of each nature and substance that unite in one person. In order to pay the debt due by man, the inviolable nature (of God) united itself with our frail nature in order that, according to the requirements of our case, one and the same Mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, might be mortal according to one side of His being, and immortal according to the other. The true God was, accordingly, born in the full and perfect nature of a real man, complete in the attributes of both His own nature and of ours, &c. For He that is truly God is also truly man; nor is this union merely apparent, the lowliness of humanity and the highness of Deity communicating themselves to each other. For as God is not changed by compassion, so the humanity is not crushed by the dignity conferred upon it. For each nature does, in connection with the other, what is peculiar to itself, *i.e.*, the Word does what is the Word's, while the flesh carries out what belongs to the flesh.—*Letter of Leo the Great to Flavian (Synod of Chalcedon).*

[13302] "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham." He "took"—He did not inherit or receive—a body. It is not the language that describes the ordinary birth of a common man. How strange it would sound if we were to speak of our children as if they had had a thought or volition respecting their nature, and as if they were pleased to take on them such and such a body when they were born! It is impossible not to see in this language that it marks an essential and prominent difference between Christ's entrance into this life and that of ordinary men. It describes voluntary action. It was an act contemplated beforehand. It implies not only pre-existence, but power, dignity, and condescension. But the language clearly indicates a choice exercised by one raised higher than all merely created beings. "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham." That is, He is more than man. He is more than an angel. He refused, when turning in His mind the course he should pursue, to take on Him the nature of angels, but concluded, for a good and sufficient reason, to assume even a lower place, and to become a man. Is He less than God that is more than man and more than angel?—*H. Ward Beecher.*

[13303] Before the world was, there was that in the mind of God which we may call the humanity of His Divinity. It is called in Scripture the Word, the Son, the form of God. It is in virtue of this that we have a right to attribute to Him our own feelings; it is in virtue of this that Scripture speaks of His wisdom, His justice, His love. Love in God is what love is in man; justice in God is what justice is in man; creative power in God is what creative power is in man; indignation in God is that which indignation is in man, barring only this, that the one is emotional, but the other is calm and pure and everlastingly still. It is through this humanity in the mind of God, if I may dare so to speak of Deity, that a revelation became possible to man. It was the Word that was made flesh; it was the Word that manifested itself to man. It is in virtue of the connection between God and man that God made man in His own image; that through a long line of prophets the human truth of God could be made known to man, till it came forth developed most entirely and at large in the incarnation of the Redeemer.—*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*

[13304] He is Immanuel, God with us—the Word made flesh—God manifest in the flesh—the express image of His person—the Life that was manifested—the glass in which we look to behold the glory of the Lord—the fulness of God revealed bodily—the power of God—the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ—the image of the invisible God. In all these, and in a very great number of similar instances, language is used in reference to Christ which indicates an opinion that His advent is the appearing of God; His deepest reality, that He expresses the fulness of the life of God. Nor does it satisfy this language at all to conceive that Christ is a good man, or a perfect man, and that so He is an illustration or image of God. Such a construction might be given to a single expression of the kind, for we use occasionally an almost violent figure. But this is cool, ordinary, undeclamatory language, and the same idea is turned round and round, appears and reappears in different shapes, and becomes, in fact, the hinge of the gospel—the

central light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, shining unto men. It should also be added that probably a very great share of the difficulties that compass this subject were originally created by overlooking, or making no sufficient account of, the very class of representations here referred to; for we throw away all the solvents of the Incarnation and the Trinity that are given us, and then complain of our difficulties.—*H. Bushnell, D.D.*

[13305] Had the Father become incarnate, then, being the Father by nature, and becoming a Son by incarnation, He would have been both Father and Son, which would have been altogether incongruous; and there would, moreover, have been two Sons in the Trinity. For a like reason the Holy Ghost would not become incarnate, for then, becoming a Son by incarnation, He would have been both Son and Holy Ghost; and in this case too there would have been two Sons in the Trinity. Hence to become incarnate was suitable to the Son alone.—*Marcus Dods, D.D.*

[13306] He who was "God God," yea, "very God of very God, was for us men *made man*." Incarnation, then, was more than the mere union of the Divine and human natures, that the God might act sometimes, and at other times the man. Such a thought is Nestorianism, very thinly veiled. Incarnation was the Divine Being entering into the human condition, and dwelling among us men, the individual, indivisible Christ. And all His actings were those of an Individual —the Christ of God.

Let us next inquire what the human condition is. St. Paul (1 Thess. v. 23) describes it as threefold, "Spirit, soul (or mind), and body." Into this condition, then, in all its entireness, our blessed Lord entered. He took this human body, in conformity with all its laws, and subject to all its requirements. No one can for a moment suppose that He ate and drank and slept merely to conform Himself to the habitudes of His disciples. These disciples knew that He was really hungry when they "prayed Him, saying, Master, eat." He showed on the same occasion the reality of thirst in saying to the woman of Samaria, "Give Me to drink." And again, we recognize the reality of weariness, for "Jesus being weary with His journey, sat" while He thus spake "upon the well" (John iv. 6, 7, 31). The human mind or "soul" has also its invariable laws. It grows, and is developed in its powers and faculties, as truth and wisdom are poured into it by a fostering Creator. And so it was with our Lord and Saviour. "Jesus increased," writes St. Luke (ii. 52), "in wisdom and stature."—*Wm. Tait, D.D.*

[13307] The body of Jesus was created a fit dwelling for His soul. . . . It was formed also to suffer exquisitely, in order to accomplish the great work of our redemption. Hence its sensibilities were quickened and refined, and all its capabilities of feeling rendered delicate, and active, and rapid, and acute, with the power of communicating thrills of an intensity which we could hardly comprehend. It was in these respects like no other human body that ever was. If we could have seen it as it really was in itself, we should have been both amazed and terrified to see a vessel of such heavenly fragility moving about among the coarse forms and in the jarring complexities of common earthly life. Neither must we forget that it was formed also to bear, without breaking, impetuous torrents of glory. That little infant frame, white as a snowdrop on the lap of winter, light almost as a snowflake on the chill night air, smooth as the cushioned drift of snow which the wind has lightly strewn outside the walls of Bethlehem, is at this moment holding within itself, as if it were of adamantine rock, the fires of the beatific light, the stupendous ocean of the mighty vision, the gigantic play of eternal things that come and go, and live within its soul. A Person, omnipotent and infinite, sits within those white walls of fleshly marble, and they do not even vibrate with the marvellous indwelling.—*F. W. Faber, D.D.*

[13308] Such is the incarnation of the Son of God; such is the event that astounds the angels who have no part in it; while men, its subjects, can hear it with less interest than the fable of a romance. In all other suppositions, having regard to Christ's connection with human sin, there is but outward humiliation, a contact with degradation which still leaves the internal nature unaltered. But the Lord of heaven and earth blended our nature with His own; He took the manhood into God. He bound us up with Himself as one indivisible being; He shared not only our state, but our nature and essence; He took from us a human nature that He might give us a Divine. And remember, further, that this mystery of the God and man is a mystery for everlasting. As there ever has been, and ever will be, the eternal Son of God, so will there ever remain the eternal Son of man. This blessed union is incapable of dissolution; our immortality is suspended on its continuance; we could not have life eternal unless God were to be man eternal. The first-fruits will remain with the rest of the harvest in glory. Yes; for evermore shall the ransomed of Zion behold their own bright model in heaven, and grow more Divine as they behold. He will still, as man and God, be the link that connects them with the Father; this poor humanity for which He suffered so bitterly He loves too deeply to part with it. It is said that mothers love with most tenderness the child for whom they have suffered most; the agonies of the Eternal endured in our behalf have attached Him for ever to our world and our nature. That nature He retains for ever. From it, quickened by the divinity, proceed mysterious influences (those which He calls the gift of His body and blood) to His militant Church below; with it He pleads before the Father, when through the Cross He would gain forgiveness for our repented sins and infirmities; in it He

will rule for ever, dispensing the terms of His judgment and the treasures of His love.—*Wm. Archer Butler, M.A.*

II. Manner of the Miraculous Conception.

1 Reality of the miracle.

(1) *Conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary.*

[13309] The narrative of our Lord's conception and birth is given by two of the four Evangelists, St. Matthew and St. Luke. The simple language of the first is, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child by the Holy Ghost" (Matt. i. 18). And a few verses further on, this is said to be the fulfilment of God's Word, spoken by the Prophet Isaiah. . . . "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is God with us" (Ibid. ii. 23): this, being ushered in by the statement of the holy angel to Joseph, "for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Ibid. ii. 28). . . . To the somewhat more detailed account of St. Luke (i. 2) it must be added that St. Matthew expressly declares Joseph "knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son" (Matt. i. 25). Upon these statements the Church founds the article of the creed which declares that Jesus Christ was "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," and upon these statements, combined with others, rests the doctrine that God the Son became Incarnate, and was made man.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13310] His coming into the world was after the manner of other men, but His conception and generation were extraordinary.

[13311] The incarnation of Christ was supernatural; conceived by the Holy Ghost. He was made under the law (Gal. iv. 4), so as to be able to fulfil its demands and endure its curse. The Lord Jesus took our nature in its form of humiliation and lowliness, weakness, and infirmity.—*Rev. G. S. Bowes, B.A.*

[13312] It was meet that He who was to introduce here on earth a new birth should Himself be born by a new mode. It was not fit that the Son of God should be born of the seed of man, for He would then have been entirely a son of man. He would not have been the Son of God at all, nor would He have been greater than Solomon or Jonah. Ebion would then be justified. The Divine germ was to be substituted for the human seed.—*Tertullian.*

[13313] The title "Second Adam," which in Scripture is applied to our Lord, implies not only His headship as regards the Church, but a peculiarity of origin as regards Himself. As the first Adam came into existence by a direct exercise of miraculous power, while his descendants are propagated by a natural law, so we naturally expect something analogous in the case of the second Adam. But this was not only appropriate; it was necessary. For if the effects of sin were to be reversed in the new spiritual creation, it is evident that He who was to be the first link of the series must Himself be free from the common taint; and this could not be the case, except by a miracle, had He come into the world in the ordinary way. That which is born of the flesh is, and must remain, flesh (John iii. 6). It was necessary, therefore, that as regards the person of the Redeemer an interruption should take place of the law of nature, and that though born of woman He should Himself inherit no original taint of sin. For a human being to come into the world without sin requires that his birth should be, in whatever sense, supernatural.—*Litton.*

[13314] As Christ was made of the substance of the Virgin, so was He not made of the substance of the Holy Ghost, whose essence cannot at all be made. And because the Holy Ghost did not beget Him by any communication of His essence, therefore He is not the Father of Him, though He were conceived of the Holy Ghost. And if at any time I have said Christ was begotten by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, if the ancients speak as if He generated the Son, it is not to be understood as if the Spirit did perform any proper act of generation, such as is the foundation of paternity.—*Pearson.*

[13315] It is maintained that in this incarnation there is no conversion of one nature into the other, nor any confusion between them. There is no confusion or mixture of the two natures, for otherwise a third something would result, which would be neither God nor man. The affections and infirmities of our nature could not belong to such a being. Moreover, the Godhead being indivisible in substance, a confusion of substance must intermix the Father also. Further, the Divine cannot be converted into the human nature, for the uncreated Godhead cannot be created or made. Nor can the human nature be converted into the Divine, as the Eutychians and other monophysites taught. —*T. P. Boultbee, D.D.*

[13316] It is declared that His flesh was generated by the immediate act of the Holy Ghost, and therefore that if that which was generated was fallen and sinful, then the Holy Ghost was the doer of this sinful act, the generator of this sinful thing. Now without stopping at present to show that this is nothing but an aggravated form of manichæism, I would remark that it is in direct opposition to the very letter of the text, which declares that what was generated was a "holy thing." Now what was generated was the humanity of our Lord; which is not called a person, which it was not, but a thing. And the declaration refers not to what would be the future character of that humanity,

as founded upon the acts of our Lord's life, but to his character as genetated.—*Marcus Dods, D.D.*

[13317] Peculiar in nature, it is not surprising Christ is described as peculiar in generation. The incarnation necessarily presupposes a manner of entrance into human life special and unusual. It would have been indefensible apart from an extraordinary conception, for His derivation must correspond with His superior personality. Ordinary generation and an incarnation are conditions that cannot combine, for the Incarnate One must be of God and the subject of a unique creative act. The historical account satisfies all requirements on the matter, and strikingly elucidates what to us would have been a grave problem to solve. Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary: having been thus conceived, He was sinless, and having been thus born, He was human. It is common on the part of the rationalistic school to treat this account as an invention, but far fewer difficulties attend its acceptance as true than its rejection as false. It is a connected, plausible, harmonious story; dignified, chaste, and in completest accord with the life that follows. It cannot be alleged that such a beginning is discrepant with the personality the Gospels depict. Besides, if an invention, it was a dexterous and unparalleled one, and having nothing of the clearly fabulous character of mythological legends. To class it with the accounts given us of the pagan gods is to betray an incapacity for discriminating between the frivolous and the grave, the puerile and the sublime.—*John Baird, D.D.*

[13318] His participation of our humiliation that we might partake of His exaltation held a certain middle course, even in the nativity of His flesh; so that we should be born in sinful flesh, but He in the likeness of sinful flesh; that we should be born not only of flesh and blood, but also of the will of man, and of the will of the flesh; but He only of flesh and blood, and not of the will of man, or of the will of the flesh, but of God. We therefore are born unto death, on account of sin; but He, on account of us, was born unto death without sin. And as His humiliation in which He descended to us was not, in all respects, equalled to our humiliation in which He here found us, even so our exaltation, in which we ascend to Him, will not be equalled to His exaltation, in which we shall there find Him. We shall be made sons of God by His grace; but He was always by nature the Son of God. We, when converted, shall be united to God as inferiors; He, never needing conversion, remains equal with God. We are made partakers of eternal life; He is eternal life. He alone therefore, even when made man, still remaining God, never had any sin, nor took sinful flesh, though He took it of the sinful flesh of His mother. For what flesh He took of her, that truly He either purified that it might be assumed, or He purified it in the assumption. Wherefore He created whom He might choose, and chose, from whom He might be created, a virgin mother, not conceiving by the law of sinful flesh, that is, by the motion of carnal concupiscence, but by a pious faith deserving to have the holy seed formed in her.—*St. Augustine.*

[13319] Of all the ways and titles of Sonship, doubtless the most wondrous is that which made Christ at once the Son of God and the Son of man. The eternal generation of the Word of God is too wholly beyond our comprehension to be matter of real amazement. It is a fact in a sphere of being that utterly overpasses our conjectures. All colours are alike to the blind, and all suppositions as to the substantial nature and essence of God are, apart from revelation, equally possible or impossible to us. On the other hand, the resurrection, marvellous as it is, is easily conceivable when once the deity of Him who rose is granted. But the incarnation of God, the conjunction of Divine and human, is just sufficiently within our capacity (for we do know one member of the connexion) to let us feel how infinitely it also transcends it. It is the mystery of mysteries, the wonder of heaven and earth, each alike astonished at the union of both, the one everlasting miracle of Divine power and love. In such a subject as this, what can one say which is not unworthy of it? It were vain to try amplification or ornament of such things as these. This matter is far vaster than our vastest conception, infinitely grander than our loftiest; yet overpoweringly awful as it is, how familiarity still reconciles us to hearing of it without awe!—*Wm. Archer Butler, M.A.*

2 Objections urged against the miracle.

(1) *That the facts alleged were within the knowledge of very few persons.*

[13320] It was undoubtedly the case that few persons had any personal knowledge respecting the miraculous conception of Christ. The first person to whom it was known would, of course, be the Blessed Virgin herself, who was to be the instrumental medium of the incarnation; and the second, so far as we are informed by Holy Scripture, was her subsequent husband and protector, Joseph. It cannot be reasonably supposed that the parents of the Blessed Virgin were unacquainted with the supernatural character of their daughter's conception; and the fact seems to have been communicated to Elisabeth by Divine revelation, perhaps at the moment of her cousin Mary's visit to her. But that this conception before her marriage to Joseph was not generally known to her relatives and acquaintances seems to be proved by the intention which he had formed of annulling their betrothal in some private manner by which he could spare her from shame. It appears, therefore, to be a probable conclusion that the circumstances of our Lord's incarnation were all of such a character as to lead those to whom the Divine secret was not confided, to the con-

clusion, "Is not this the son of Joseph?" But the very fact that circumstances were so ordered as to make such an opinion possible shows that the revelation of the truth was not intended to be made, at that time, to the world at large. It was part of God's providence that the Blessed Virgin should pass through the world as the wife of Joseph, and not as a virgin mother, and that the mystery of the incarnation should be concealed from all but a few until after the resurrection of Christ.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13321] The primitive Church believed that this reticence had reference to the contest between Christ, while in His unglorified human nature, and the great adversary whom He had come to defeat. So St. Ignatius says, "The virginity of Mary was hidden from the prince of this world, as was also her offspring." It may have been that as our Lord did not gird Himself for the warfare until the Temptation, it was fitting that Satan should not know of His miraculous entry into the world. But it must also be remembered that the force, so to speak, of our Lord's miraculous conception and birth received its complement in His ministry. The Son of God became Incarnate that He might accomplish the work of redemption, which work was not completed until He had ascended in His human nature to heaven. No object, as far as can be seen, would have been gained by a general disclosure of the mystery of His conception before His work had been completed; and certainly, when the Jews would not believe the possibility of His descent from heaven, even though their minds were prepared for such a fact by the record of ancient theophanies and angelic visits, it is not probable that they would have believed an outspoken declaration of Christ's true origin. Consequently it would be contrary to reason, under the circumstances, to expect that our Lord's miraculous conception would have been known to any number of persons during the time of His ministry; and the absence of any attempt in the Gospels to show that it was so known is evidence that the evangelists and apostles rested upon Divine revelation as the true proof of the fact.—*Ibid.*

[13322] It is perfectly true that in the Synoptic Gospels there is no indication that anybody knew the peculiar way in which our Lord was born. I believe it was entirely unknown to the nation at large—unknown to the twelve—unknown to His own family circle—unknown (I think) to all save His virgin mother and her husband Joseph. Do you ask why such secrecy? Why, just suppose it had been noised abroad through the little town of Nazareth that the betrothed wife of just and devout Joseph had become a mother before her marriage, and that he, instead of immediately giving her a bill of divorcement, had taken her to wife as if nothing wrong had happened: where would the reputation of either of them have been at Nazareth? And if in His later years a breath of suspicion had arisen as to the legitimacy of His birth, or indeed as to anything peculiar about it, who does not see how important an element this would form in the public mind for determining whether His claims were to be recognized and welcomed, or rejected with contempt? Yet so far was this from being the case, that when at length He did come to Nazareth, their only wonder was how the carpenter's son, whom they had known from childhood, should be what His teaching seemed to show that He was. But His own family, you may say—how should they not have known it? Well, it was scarcely a subject for family communication; nor, had they known it, could they be expected to keep it quite to themselves. Indeed, the statement in the Fourth Gospel, that "neither did His brethren believe in Him," and this not long before His death, is scarcely to be understood at all if they were cognisant of the manner of His birth. I believe, therefore, that in the high wisdom that presided over every step in this matchless life, it was provided that for a considerable time only His virgin mother and His supposed father should know how "unto us a Child was born, unto us a Son was given, whose name should be called Wonderful, the Mighty God."—*David Thomas, D.D.*

[13323] It was divinely intended that men's convictions of the sinlessness of our Lord should in the first instance be grounded, not on the manner of His birth, but on the patent facts of His life, His teaching, and His works; and that when at length they came to learn in what manner He came into the world, they should see in this merely the proper explanation, the all-sufficient key, to what would otherwise have defied explanation — showing the high, the unique sense in which He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and (what could be said of no other man) separate from sinners," yet partaker of their nature. Now the Gospels are just a record of those facts of His life which prove Him to be this. Not that they were written to; the Synoptic Gospels bear not the slightest evidence of their having been written to establish this or any other doctrinal position. They are not preaching histories, but an unvarnished relation of facts; and hence it is, I have not the least doubt, that in narrating the facts of His public life, just as they occurred, they never go back upon His miraculous conception as furnishing the original basis for such a life.—*Ibid.*

[13324] The Fourth Gospel must be judged of on a different principle; for so usually does it comment on the incidents which it records, and the dialogues and discourses which it relates, that it has been called, in express contrast with the other three, the reflective Gospel. Why then, it may be asked, is there no allusion to the miraculous conception even there? In answer to this, let it be observed, that the ablest and best critics of even the extreme wing of the negative school, as well as the orthodox, are satisfied that the three Synoptic Gospels

were not only in possession of the writer of the Fourth Gospel, but served as its foundation. Hilgenfield, no less than Hengstenberg; Baur, no less than Luthardt; Keim, no less than Godet—all admit this. If so, then the Apostle John, whom I assume to be the fourth Evangelist, had no need to depend on the Virgin as to the manner in which "the Word was made flesh." Who can doubt, then, that—since it is incredible that he should have had any doubt on the fact—the absence of any express allusion to it was intentional? The object of his Gospel is transparently different from that of the three others. Theirs was to let the facts speak for themselves; his was to show how the glory of the only begotten of the Father had been unveiled in the flesh. And confining himself for this purpose to what he had himself witnessed, he might have taken for the motto of his Gospel what he says of his First Epistle: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." —*Ibid.*

(2) *That the miraculous conception is incredible, because beyond the bounds of possibility.*

[13325] To say that it would be contrary to experience is only to allege what every theologian at once admits, that one instance, and one only, of such a miraculous conception has ever occurred. To say that it would be impossible is also to beg the question. No rational physiologist who believed an act of creation possible would allege that such an occurrence was beyond the power of the Creator to effect; and to call this exceptional and solitary instance of parthenogenesis an impossibility would be as absurd as to deny the possibility of any genesis of human nature.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13326] The exclamation of contemporary Jews, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" has been taken up by modern unbelievers on much less rational grounds. Against such a theory we have what the Jews of Christ's day had not—the statement of the Gospel (bearing on its face the stamp of sinful truthfulness), and the continuous tradition of the Christian world. The Talmud and some modern Jewish accounts of Christ adopt the idea which arose in the mind of Joseph before the truth was revealed to him. It does not appear that any such reproach was cast upon the honour of our Lord's mother by contemporaries, not even by the generation which said of our Lord Himself, "He hath a devil." Yet those who invented the blasphemy are dependent upon the Gospel, and that alone, for any account whatever of Christ's conception and birth, and might with more reason deny the whole than add to it this wicked invention.—*Ibid.*

[13327] Driven from arguing against His sayings, and harassed with the evidence of His character, the final and philosophical ground is assumed that an incarnation is impossible. This is essentially the anti-supernatural position. Whatever involves the contact or action of God in relation to the world or men is pronounced impossible. Hence providence, inspiration, miracles, are no more credible or possible than an incarnation. But (1) this is a settlement of a grave question apart from and independent of a consideration of facts. Sweeping negatives are easily framed. It is easy to pronounce the revolution of the earth impossible, and there is much in our feelings and consciousness to favour it; but what of the fact of night and day? And it is easy to pronounce the incarnation impossible; but what of the stupendous, impressive, indestructible fact of Jesus Christ? (2) The incarnation is no more impossible than the creation. It is easier to conceive God becoming man than a world produced from nothing. If we are entitled to describe anything as impossible, it is surely creation; yet how is the world to be accounted for? It is strange philosophy to accept the greater and reject the less. (3) This is a formula without warrant. Given appropriate moral conditions, from whence can the impossibility arise? If God be void of personality—a mere diffused immensity —we can understand the impossibility; but, granting His essential, self-existing Being, it is proceeding further than our knowledge justifies eternally to restrict Him to a specific mode. It seems reasonable to argue that, if it were impossible God could become man, it were equally impossible He could make man in His own image.—*John Baird, D.D.*

III. The Indissoluble Union between the Divine and the Human Nature.

1 Its deduced proofs.

(1) *From the unique grandeur of Christ's personal claims.*

[13328] He claims as the Son a real self-conscious pre-existence before man, and even before the world, consequently also before time, for time was created with the world. "Before Abraham was," He says, "I am," significantly using the past in the one, and the present in the other case, to mark the difference between man's temporal and His own eternal mode of existence; and in His intercessory prayer He asks to be clothed again with the glory which He had with the Father before the foundation of the world. He assumes Divine names and attributes. As far as consistent with His state of humiliation, He demands and receives Divine honours. He freely and repeatedly exercises the prerogative of pardoning sin in His own name, which the unbelieving Scribes and Pharisees, with a logic whose force is irresistible on their premises, looked upon as blasphemous presumption. He familiarly classes Himself with the infinite majesty of Jehovah in one common plural, and boldly declares, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father;" "I and My Father are one." He co-ordinates Himself,

in the baptismal formula, with the Divine Father and Divine Spirit, and allows Himself to be called by Thomas, in the name of all the apostles, "My Lord and my God." These are the most astounding and transcendent pretensions ever set up by any being. He, the humblest and lowliest of men, makes them repeatedly and uniformly to the last, in the face of the whole world, even in the darkest hour of suffering. He makes them not in swelling, pompous, ostentatious language, which almost necessarily springs from false pretensions; but in a natural, spontaneous style, with perfect ease, freedom, and composure, as a native prince would speak of the attributes and scenes of royalty at his father's court. He never falters or doubts, never apologizes for them, never enters into an explanation. He sets them forth as self-evident truths, which need only to be stated to challenge the belief and submission of mankind. Now, suppose for a moment a purely human teacher, however good and great—suppose a Moses or Elijah, a John the Baptist, an Apostle Paul or John, not to speak of any father, schoolman, or reformer—to say, "I am the Light of the world;" "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life;" "I and My Father are one;" and to call upon all men, "Come unto Me;" "Follow Me," that you may find "life" and "peace" which you cannot find anywhere else; would it not create a universal feeling of pity or indignation? No human being on earth could set up the least of these pretensions without being set down at once as a madman or a blasphemer. But from the mouth of Christ these colossal pretensions excite neither pity nor indignation, nor even the least feeling of incongruity or impropriety. We read and hear them over and over again without surprise. They seem perfectly natural and well sustained by a most extraordinary life, and the most extraordinary works. There is no room here for the least suspicion of vanity, pride, or self-deception. For eighteen hundred years these claims have been acknowledged by millions of people of all nations and tongues, of all classes and conditions, of the most learned and mighty, as well as the most ignorant and humble, with an instinctive sense of the perfect agreement of what Christ claimed to be with what He really was—both God and man.—*Prof. Schaff.*

[13329] This model man who held no compromise with evil, who frowned away dissimulation from His presence, of whose inimitable morals Rosseau, no friend of His, said that if the life and death of Socrates were those of an angel, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God; this model man professed all His life to be Divine, received Divine honours without rebuking the offerers, insisted upon His profession of Divinity so strongly that the Jews stoned Him for blasphemy, never failed to say that He was one with the Father, and that He should, by and by, come again in the clouds of heaven. Oh, Jesus Christ cannot simply be a good and a benevolent man. There are only two alternatives possible: He is an impostor or a God.—*Dr. Morley Punshon.*

[13330] A threefold impression is made upon every serious and unprejudiced reader of the New Testament concerning Jesus Christ, to wit, that He is a real man, that He sustains a unique relation to the Deity, and that this relation grows out of the very substance of His being. Wherever, whenever, on whatsoever occasion, under whatsoever circumstances Jesus meets us, He makes the impression on us that we are in the presence of a real man, who has all the attributes and wants of humanity—who thinks, wills, resolves, has emotions, grieves, rejoices, sleeps, travels, grows fatigued, needs rest, eats and drinks, not for a show, but to satisfy His real wants, &c. But this real man assumes a relation to the Deity which no created being can claim without blasphemy, saying that He is of one substance (ἓν) with God; that He was with God in heaven before He came down on earth; that He wishes to return thither after the accomplishment of His mission—representing Himself as an ambassador of God, that He acts in God's name and stead, whose doctrine is not His own, but God's, who performs His miracles in the power of God, &c.—*Prof. John A. Reubelt.*

[13331] His most intimate and highly-gifted followers and disciples have both confirmed and enlarged these declarations of their Master. John tells us expressly that his Master had existed from all eternity in a capacity to which self-consciousness and personality belong, and that He in the course of time had become something that He was not always—namely, man. In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was toward (πρός) God (τὸν Θεόν), and the Logos was God (Θεός)—John i. 1; and verse 14: "And the Logos became flesh." Nearly the same is affirmed by the Apostle Paul, who says (Phil. ii. 6, 7): "Who, existing in the form of God, considered it not robbery to continue in this God-like state of existence, but emptied Himself, having assumed the servant form, and having become in the likeness of men." Declarations to this effect abound in the New Testament, but these two will suffice. Moreover, not only the highest honours that can be paid by an intelligent creature to another, but even supreme worship is paid to Him by His disciples. He places Himself on a level with the Father and the Holy Ghost in baptism; He is joined with them in invoking the Divine blessing; He is represented as being entrusted with the government of the world.—*Ibid.*

[13332] The clear revelation of our Lord's humanity surrounds with the greater significance the higher claims He made, and the superhuman character He displayed, just as the dark background of the picture imparts more definite form to the bright figure painted on it. The problem of our Lord's language arises from His unhesi-

tating, simultaneous, thoughtful description of Himself as Son of man and Son of God. Our interpretation of these titles must be consistent; and if the one signifies true man, the other must signify true God. In the line of these titles we find a twofold type of utterance. He that said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death" (Mark xiv. 34), said also, "I am the light of the world" (John viii. 12). He that asked the woman of Samaria, "Give me to drink" (John iv. 7), declared, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water" (John iv. 10). He that said, "The Son of man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt. viii. 20), also said, "I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand" (John x. 28). His utterances are inexplicable apart from His oneness with God and His brotherhood with man. A sense of the Divine and human never seems absent from Him. His greatness He distinctly avows. He spoke as one enjoying the closest personal relationship with God. His sayings reveal the consciousness of an Incarnate One.—*John Baird, D.D.*

(2) *From the incomparable superiority of Christ, as man, to other men.*

[13333] The great men whom we have heard and have honoured sink into pigmies if you but compare them to Christ. A moment before, towering above the average of humanity like mountain peaks, now they shrink and wane into mole-hills before the great presence of the mighty Christ. . . . Who are all those grand heroes of past ages, at whose mention our blood thrills—who are all the great and good who have stood up and suffered for the truth? Are they Christs, or what? They are no more to be compared to Him than the petty rushlight's flame to the broad zone of light that streams from the great sun. Christ leads, they follow. He commands, they obey. He stands among them, they kneel in humblest adoration.—*Hepworth.*

[13334] In Him is centred all of good and exalted in our nature. Whatever may be the unlooked-for phenomena of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young for ever. All ages will say, that among the sons of men none has ever been greater than Jesus.—*Renan.*

[13335] The life and sayings of Jesus place the Prophet of Nazareth in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius, of whom our species can boast. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral Reformer and Martyr to that mission who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life.—*John Stuart Mill.*

[These last two admissions are enhanced in value, as coming from the lips of sceptics.]

[13336] The portrait which is given us in the sacred writings of the Lord Jesus is such as no human being could have invented—it must have been copied from an original. We might say of a man that he was without sin, and without error, and the very image of Divine holiness; but we could not pourtray such an image without some features being introduced by our limited, erring, sinful minds, which would betray their origin. Here, however, we have a perfect, a detailed, and lively picture, in all possible situations, amidst all changes of inner and outer life, and in the most striking contrasts. And in every feature, in every slightest turn, this form commands our admiration, and makes us bow down before it.—*Luthardt.*

[13337] There shines forth from the Gospels the reflected splendour of a sublimity proceeding from the person of Jesus Christ, of so Divine a kind as only the Divine could ever have manifested upon earth.—*Goethe.*

[13338] The theory of an incarnation is that which the Christian Church has always held best to explain the facts of the life of Christ. On perusing the Gospels we feel we are in contact with a life, purer, higher, greater than ours; a life of noble beneficence and mighty deeds; a life which exceeds human dimensions, and surpasses ordinary human conditions. Who then was He whose biography the Gospels furnish? To what is His superiority of character and fulness of power to be traced? What view of His person do the facts of His life suggest and support? How is the mystery of His consciousness of God to be solved? His vivid conception of the Father? It is a simple question of induction: given so many particulars, what is the general principle you conclude? Apply the Baconian method to the Gospels as is done to the phenomena of nature, and what doctrine respecting Christ do you frame? What is the theory which gathers the whole facts of the case into unity—which is so comprehensive as to cover every incident and aspect of His life—which does full and adequate justice to His superhuman birth, His wondrous miracles, His heavenly teaching, His lofty claims, His matchless character? Accepting the Gospels as we have them, there is but one conclusion to which we can come, and that is, that Christ was a Divine Person in human form: in other words, that there was an incarnation.—*John Baird, D.D.*

[13339] The qualities of His character, likewise, clearly surpass the normal human type. No age or civilization has produced a personality equal to His. Had He been no more than an ordinary member of the race, He would long ere this have had His rivals in moral excellence.

But whether we search among patriarchs, prophets, or apostles, or the poets or philosophers of Greece, or the illustrious for worth in more recent times, we find none whom we can regard as Christ's equals or superiors. His holiness was without an alloy. He appears clothed with humility, majesty, compassion, unselfishness, gentleness, charity. We see in Him all that is purest and loveliest—a heart that was never soured with envy, a brow that never frowned with malice. He lived a perfect and faultless life, and is the ideal pattern for men, whatever their nationality or stage of culture. All great characters in the past have had their individual weaknesses, but Christ had none. No blemish, no indiscretion, no aberration, no hasty word, no unworthy action, no mean servility can we charge against Him. He is peerless among the sons of men—towering high above the human family.—*Ibid.*

[13340] The evidence of history, and the laws of the human mind, pronounce the impossibility of any mere man—especially in the circumstances in which He was placed—rising to that wealth of wisdom and that moral perfection which belonged to Him, An incarnation of Divinity, in this unparalleled instance, is alone sufficient—and it is perfectly sufficient—to account for a combination of spiritual phenomena with outward conditions, never realized except in Jesus of Nazareth. He must have been Divine as well as human, *the* One Incarnation for all time, God *in* man.—*Young.*

(3) *From the unmistakable evidence of His wondrous life and actions.*

[13341] It is observed that in the whole narrative of our Saviour's life no passage is related of Him low or weak, but it is immediately seconded, and as it were corrected by another high and miraculous. No sooner was Christ humbled to a manger, but the contempt of the place was took off with the glory of the attendance, in the ministration of angels. His submission to that mean and coarse ceremony of circumcision was ennobled with the public attestation of Simeon concerning Him; His fasting and temptation attended with another service of angels; His baptism with a glorious recognition by a voice from heaven. When He seemed to show weakness in seeking fruit upon that fig-tree that had none, He manifested His power by cursing it to deadness with a word. When He seemed to be overpowered at His attachments, He then exerted His mightiness in causing His armed adversaries to fall backwards, and healing Malchus's ear with a touch. When He underwent the lash and violent infamy of crucifixion and death, then did the universal frame of nature give testimony to His divinity; the temple rending, the sun darkening, and the earth quaking, the whole creation seemed to sympathize with His passion. And when afterwards He seemed to be in the very kingdom and dominions of death, by descending into the grave He quickly confuted the dishonour of that by an astonishing resurrection, and, by an argument *ex abundanti*, proved the divinity of His person over and over, in an equally miraculous ascension.—*R. South, D.D.*, 1633–1716.

[13342] In every part of our Lord's humiliation there is an emission of some beams of His Godhead, that whenever He is seen to be true man, He might be known to be true God also. Is Christ hungry? There was a fast of forty days' continuance preceding, to show how, as God, He could sustain His human nature. The verity of His human nature is seen, because He submitted to all our sinless infirmities. The power of His Divine nature was manifested, because it enabled Him to continue forty days and nights without eating or drinking anything, the utmost that an ordinary man can fast being but nine days usually. Thus His divinity and humanity are expressed in most or all of His actions (John i. 14). There was a veil of flesh, yet the glory of His Divine nature was seen, and might be seen, by all that had an eye and heart to see it. He lay in the manger at Bethlehem, but a star appeared to conduct the wise men to Him; and angels proclaimed His birth to the shepherds (Luke ii. 13, 14). He grew up from a child, at the ordinary rate of other children; but when He was but twelve years old He disputed with the doctors (Luke ii. 42). He submitted to baptism, but then owned by a voice from heaven to be God's beloved Son. He was deceived in the fig-tree when an hungered, which shows the infirmity of human ignorance; but suddenly blasted it, and manifested the glory of a Divine power (Matt. xxi. 19). Here tempted by Satan, but ministered unto and attended upon by a multitude of glorious angels (Matt. iv. 11); finally crucified through weakness, but living by the power of God (2 Cor. xiii. 4). He hung dying on the cross; but then the rocks were rent, the graves opened, and the sun darkened. All along you may have these intermixtures.—*T. Manton, D.D.*, 1620–1677.

[13343] "How human our Saviour was!" This love, this tender pity, this caring for our transitory joys and sorrows, are Divine—Divine far more than human; and only human because they were first Divine.—*Schönberg Cotta Series.*

(4) *From His demands and influence upon the soul.*

[13344] If Christ be not Divine, every impulse of the Christian world falls to a lower octave, and light and love and hope alike decline.—*David Living.*

[13345] My God! I will not receive Thee merely through grammars, technical discussions, and "various readings." I will receive Thee because when Thou dost come into my heart I know that all the heaven that I can contain is already within me when Thou art near. My Lord, and my God!—*Joseph Parker, D.D.*

[13346] Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself founded great empires, but upon what did the creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire upon love, and to this day millions would die for Him. . . . If once the Divine character of Christ is admitted, Christian doctrine exhibits the precision and clearness of algebra, so that we are struck with admiration at its scientific connection and unity. The nature of Christ is, I grant it, from one end to another, a web of mysteries; but this mysteriousness does but correspond to the difficulties which all existence contains: let it be rejected, and the whole world is an enigma; let it be accepted, and we possess a wonderful explanation of the history of man. The gospel possesses a secret virtue, a something which works powerfully, a warmth which both influences the understanding and penetrates the heart. . . . The soul, charmed, . . . is no longer its own possession; God possesses it entirely; it is He who directs its thoughts and faculties; it is His. What a proof of the divinity of Jesus!—*Napoleon Bonaparte.*

[13347] Although the above noble words of Napoleon are here inserted to show the influence of Christ upon the soul of man, we can scarcely help fancying the speaker as one who, had he lived at the time, might have been amongst the number referred to by his Lord as follows: "This people . . . honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me" (Matt. xv. 8). It becomes us all who would contemplate the matchless features of our blessed Lord, and frame sweet sounding eulogies upon the Divine character, to look well to ourselves, unless we are willing to merit the contempt due to those who kiss while they betray.—*A. M. A. W.*

[13348] Here the bare simple fact of such union between God and man, as is exhibited to us in the person of Jesus, is one profoundly significant to sinful man. In it he feels that a grasp of help and love is laid upon his heart. It commands his whole being, and he trembles at its touch. It wields over him that fulness of influence which is found only where rebuke of the past is mingled with help for the future. It awakens in him the slumbering but inextinguishable reminiscences of the lost past of the race, but at the same time thrills him with the vision of a new possible destiny.—*Rev. Robt. Lorimer, M.A.*

[13349] My kind, now vested with the eternal glory,
Of God made flesh, glorious to me became.
Henceforth those crowns which shine in mortal story,
It seemed a grief to wear, madness to claim.
To be a man, now seemed man's noblest aim;
His noblest task, to serve one, even the least,
Of those who fight God's fight, and share His kingly feast.—*Aubrey de Vere.*

(5) *From His influence upon the world.*

[13350] Fifty-five generations have passed away, and there is no name which exercises such an influence in the world to-day as the name of Him who was lifted up on the cross. It is associated with the most advanced civilization; with the best and most enduring literature; with the noblest forms of art; with the broadest systems of education; with the most gigantic enterprises of commerce; with the purest and most extended institutions of philanthropy; with the most refined and healthful social progress; and, in fine, with every element of dignity, prosperity, and power among the nations of the earth.—*Ebenezer P. Rogers.*

[13351] At this distance of time we can plainly see that no other birth since the beginnings of history has involved such important consequences to the human race. We Christians have had nearly nineteen centuries in which to form comparisons and to arrive at conclusions. We have had time to take the measure of the great statesmen, soldiers, poets, teachers, who have been foremost among mankind. Who of them all has left behind him a work which can compare with that achieved by Jesus Christ? As the first Napoleon once asked, What was the empire of Alexander or of Cæsar, or his own at its best, when compared to that of Jesus Christ? Theirs were transient: Christ's is lasting. Theirs had soon reached a limit: Christ's is ever extending. Theirs were based on force: Christ's is based on convictions. Who, again, of the great men of letters has swayed the world like Jesus Christ? Doubtless these men too have an empire. Who can dispute the influence at this hour of Plato, of Shakespeare, of Newton? But it is an influence which differs in kind from that of Jesus Christ. It interests the intellect, while He enchains the will. Nay, compare Him with the great teachers of false religions—with Sakya-Muni who preceded, or with Mahomet who followed Him, in human history. I do not forget the statistics of Buddhism, or the undeniable activities of Islam, in certain portions of the Eastern world, but these religions—this is the broad fact before us—these religions are the religions of races with no real future. Christianity is still the creed of the nations which, year by year, are more and more controlling the destinies of the human race. And, if it be urged that large portions of these very nations, Christian by profession, are now abjuring Christianity, it may be replied that such apostasy, partial it may be admitted now, is, in the long run, impossible. Man cannot dispense with religion, and, when man has once come into contact with the highest type of religion, he has thereby exhausted the religious capacities of his nature. The absolute religion makes any after it impossible for free and sincere minds. The present efforts to replace Christianity by an imaginary religion of the future distilled out of all the positive religions of the world is doomed to a failure only less complete than the attempt to replace it by mere

negations. There are not wanting signs of a rebound towards the faith. There are no signs whatever of a rising religious force capable of superseding it. Yes, all that is best, all that is most full of hope in the civilized world dates from the birthday of Jesus Christ. Doubtless we owe some good and precious things which rank high in the order of nature to the old pagan days. We owe philosophy to Greece. We owe law and well-ordered life to Rome. But the idea of progress which, however it may have been misapplied, is perhaps the most fertile and energetic in modern public life—this is the creation of the Christian creed. It springs from those high hopes of the future, whether of individuals or of the race which Christ has taught His disciples to entertain as a matter of loyalty to Himself. And the institutions which make life tolerable for the suffering classes—that is to say, for the great majority of human beings, such as hospitals—these date, one and all of them, from the appearance of Jesus Christ, from the promulgation of those principles which He proclaimed to man with sovereign authority. —*Canon Liddon.*

[13352] The incarnation is supernatural ; not magical, however ; not fantastic or visionary ; not something to be gazed at as a transient prodigy in the world's history. It is the supernatural linking itself to the onward flow of the world's life, and becoming thenceforward itself the ground and principle of the entire organism, now poised at last on its true centre.—*J. Nevin, D.D.*

[13353] The incarnation has changed the character of history, and will continue to change it ; and notwithstanding many serious drawbacks and grave hindrances, the world will progress, till by degrees the face of the earth will be made like the face of heaven. Yes, assuredly, the impulse of history is upward. God is with men bearing them aloft to the skies. He is a living energy, an irresistible abiding presence in modern society. It was not enough to give the world an impulse two millenniums ago and then leave it. The path of progress is steep and rugged ; the impulse, therefore, would soon expend its force, and mankind would again rush along the downward road to ruin. There must be a continuous outflow of moral force from Him to us. Let us then put ourselves in the proper attitude "to receive of His fulness and grace for grace."—*C. J. Jones.*

(6) *From the strict accordance of the prophetic testimonies of the Old Testament with the historical witness of the New.*

[13354] There is much in the Old Testament which, interpreted by the light of gospel history and apostolic exposition, shows that the great Deliverer of the future, whom the whole world in one form or other expected, and for whom the Jews looked as their Messiah, was spoken of in the language of inspiration as Divine. Such texts as declare Him to be the Son of God are instances of this language, the meaning of which could not be perfectly known until revealed by the event to which it referred ; but, being revealed, now assumes the nature of direct evidence.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13355] So thoroughly intermingled with the whole texture of the New Testament Scripture is the Godhead of the Saviour, that no criticism which does not destroy the book can altogether extinguish its testimony. We have seen a copy of the Gospels and Epistles which was warranted free from all trace of the Trinity, but it was not the Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We beheld it and we received instruction. It did not want beauty ; for the parables and the Sermon on the Mount and many a touching passage still were there. But neither would a garden want beauty if the grass plots and green bushes still remained, though you had carefully culled out every blossoming flower. The humanity of Jesus still is beautiful, even when the Godhead is forgotten or denied. Or rather, it looked like a coronation tapestry, with all the golden threads torn out, or an exquisite Mosaic from which some unscrupulous finger had abstracted the gems and left only the common stones ; you not only missed the glory of the whole, but in the fractures of the piece, and the coarse plaster with which the gaps were supplied, you saw how rude was the process by which its jewels had been wrenched away. It was a casket without the pearl. It was a shrine without the Shekinah. And yet, after all, it was not sufficiently expurgated ; for after reading it the thought would recur how much easier to fabricate a Gnostic Testament exempt from all trace of our Lord's humanity than a Unitarian Testament ignoring His divinity. — *James Hamilton, D.D.*

(7) *From the circumstances attending the birth of Christ.*

[13356] When I have been contemplating this subject (the Socinian hypothesis) it has always appeared to me very strange that such a magnificent apparatus should be instituted by heaven to usher into the world one who was nothing more than a *man!* Angels after angels wing their flight to Bethlehem to indicate the birth of a *man!* Gabriel, one of the most exalted of the heavenly spirits, is dispatched from the throne of God to announce the birth of a *man!* The Holy Ghost should come upon her, and the power of the Most High should overshadow the virgin, to convey into her uterus nothing but what was *human!* Another celestial envoy is delegated to Joseph to bid him not hesitate in taking Mary to wife, for that which was conceived in her was, indeed, of the Holy Ghost, but was nothing more than *man!* A most magnificent heavenly choir, consisting of a multitude of angels, cheering the midnight hours with repeating, "Glory to God in the Highest ! Good-will towards men ! " deputed to our world, and chanting these rapturous strains to celebrate

the birth of a *man!* Is it not something incongruous and disparate that heaven should display all this splendid scenery, and lavish all this pomp and pageantry to introduce into our world a mere ordinary common man, distinguished in no one natural endowment from any other of the species? But supposing the Being introduced with all this *éclat*, to be the same who was in the beginning with God, and had glory with the Father before the world was, is not the decoration and magnificence with which heaven dressed the stage, on which this Divine messenger would shortly appear, highly pertinent and honourable? and is it not with the greatest propriety that multitudes of the heavenly host, on this great occasion, the greatest that ever occurred in the annals of this world, should conjoin with harmonious voices and accordant hearts in applauding and solemnizing a condescension and benevolence illustrious and great beyond all example? —*Harwood.*

2 Oppositions in ancient and modern times to the truth of the union, in Christ's person, of the Divine and human nature.

[13357] From the very first, Christians have rendered Divine honour to Jesus Christ. Even in the New Testament they are designated as those "who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus." And Pliny, in his epistle to the Emperor Trajan, speaks of the hymns which the Christians sang in their assemblies, to Christ as to God. This fact, if we knew nothing else of the teaching of the apostolic Church concerning the person of Jesus, would be a sufficient testimony to the Divine honour which was rendered to Him. Very early, however, do we meet with a twofold opposition to Church doctrine, a Jewish and a heathen one. Jewish error saw in Jesus only the very greatest of the prophets, His superhuman greatness being lost in His real humanity. Heathen error saw in Jesus a superhuman Being, who had descended to this earth from higher spheres, but it resolved His historical reality into mere appearance. In the former, history prevails to the disparagement of idea; in the latter, idea to that of history. The Church beheld in Jesus Christ the union of the two, of history and idea, of the Divine and human. How, indeed, the two could coalesce into a perfect unity, remained a problem to reason, which never will be able to rise to the full measure of the fact. But how far are we also from so attaining to the fulness of the fact as to leave nothing unknown even in inquiries concerning natural life, so soon as they penetrate beyond the mere surface! The faith and confession of the Church, moreover, are independent of the attempts of human reason to comprehend and fathom the mystery of the person of Jesus Christ. And in this faith the various churches are unanimous. Dogmatic differences concerning this question are but of slight moment compared to the unanimity of faith. Christians of all churches bow the knee at the name of Jesus; . . . and, . . . though modern infidelity multiplies fine expressions and high-flown sentences to escape that one simple confession, that the person of Jesus is a miracle, and that the essence of His history is supernatural as long as the Gospels exist, so long will they be the sufficient refutation of such blasphemies against Him.—*Luthardt.*

[13358] As a "proof-text," 1 John iv. 3 would be alleged in support of the truth that our Lord was really man; but that it should have been necessary for the apostle to assert His humanity with such vehemence is an absolute demonstration that the Church had been taught to regard Him as being infinitely more than man. In our times the philosophical difficulties of the incarnation are often solved by the denial of the superhuman dignity of our Lord; but this was impossible in the first century. His superhuman dignity had so filled the imagination of the Church, that the solution was sought in the denial of His humanity.—*R. W. Dale, D.D.*

[13359] Although the greatest possible freedom from all preconceived notions must claim that the divinity proper of Jesus is distinctly taught by some writers of the New Testament, and is perfectly consistent with the teachings of all, although they do not expressly teach it; yet there have been at all times those within the bosom of the Christian Church who denied the divinity of the Saviour, from the Ebionites in Judæa down to the Unitarians of the nineteenth century. But it may be said here, also, in perfect consistency with truth and charity, that the rigid monotheism of these parties is also the result of *à priori* reasoning. Their deistical notions forbid them to conceive of any change whatever in the Deity, and there is consequently no trinity of persons, and still less an incarnation of one of these three persons. Unitarian notions are certainly not the result of the teachings of the New Testament. In the Old Testament the incarnation proper of Jehovah, or of a Divine hypostasis, was not taught as something to be looked for; incommunicability, as well as immutability, being some of the chief Divine attributes. We find, accordingly, that when Jesus claimed really Divine Sonship, He gave great offence to the Jews, and even His Jewish followers were only gradually raised to the belief in His divinity, while many of them never rose to this height. The heathen, likewise, had no idea of a real incarnation, as the gods of the multitude were not really Divine; and the Absolute of the philosopher was still more unapproachable to creatures than the Jehovah of the Jews. The idea of the incarnation is of specifically Christian origin, and, in order to apprehend it, it is absolutely necessary to submit to the Spirit of Christ, and to receive instruction from this source exclusively.—*Prof. John A. Reubelt.*

[13360] It is one of the most important and sacred duties of modern theology to overcome, in keeping with the uniform impression of true humanity and personal oneness produced by

the person of Christ as delineated in the New Testament, the contradictory dualism beyond which the Church doctrine of the God-man has so far failed to advance, and that in such a manner that the substance of the Catholic dogma be preserved, and all exploded errors be avoided.—*Dr. Delitzsch.*

IV. The Appropriateness of Time as regards the Divine Nativity.

1 In consideration of contemporary expectancy.

[13361] The Scripture assures us that the birth of Christ was in the "fulness of time" (Gal. iv. 4), and the wisdom of God is evidently displayed as to the time when, as well as the end for which, He came. It was at a time when the world stood in need of such a Saviour. . . . About the time of Christ's appearance (says Dr. Robertson) there prevailed a general opinion that the Almighty would send forth some eminent messenger to communicate a more perfect discovery of His will to mankind. The dignity of Christ, the virtues of His character, the glory of His kingdom, and the signs of His coming, were described by the ancient prophets with the utmost perspicuity. Guided by the sure word of prophecy, the Jews of that age concluded the period pre-determined by God to be then completed, and that the promised Messiah would suddenly appear (Luke ii. 25–38). Nor were these expectations peculiar to the Jews. By their dispersion among so many nations, by their conversation with the learned men among the heathen, and the translation of their inspired writings into a language almost universal, the principles of their religion were spread all over the East; and it became the common belief that a Prince would arise at that time in Judæa who would change the face of the world, and extend His empire from one end of the earth to the other. Now, had Christ been manifested at a more early period the world would not have been prepared to meet Him with the same fondness and zeal; had His appearance been put off for any considerable time men's expectations would have begun to languish, and the warmth of desire, from a delay of gratification, might have cooled and died away.—*Edwards.*

[13362] It is interesting to observe that all nations known in history have ever expected a liberator, a Person mysterious, Divine, and one who, according to the ancient oracles, should bring them salvation, and reconcile them with the Eternal. Prideaux, in his work on the Jews, observes that "the necessity of a mediator between God and man was from the commencement a prevailing opinion among all people." In proportion as the glorious realization approached, an extraordinary light diffused itself over the world, like the bright beamings of Jacob's star. Cicero caught some of its beams, and in his Republic announced a law eternal and universal, the law of all nations and all times; a single and common master, who should be God even, and whose reign was about to commence. Virgil, recalling the ancient oracles, celebrated the return of the Virgin, the birth of prevailing order, and the descent of the Son of God from heaven. To his eye a grand epoch speedily advanced; all the vestiges of crime were effaced, and earth was for ever delivered from fear. The Divine infant, who should reign over the peaceful world, will receive for first presents the simple fruits of earth, and the serpent will expire near His cradle. The universal tradition, moreover, was, that this celestial envoy would be man and God combined, and that He would come to achieve the salvation of the world. "He will save us," said Plato, "by teaching us the true doctrine." "Shepherd, prince, universal teacher, and sovereign truth," said Confucius, "He will possess all power in heaven and upon the earth." This lively anticipation of a mighty liberator and restorer, vanquisher of demons and embodiment of supreme good, was doubtless permitted to prevent the nations from falling into complete ignorance and despair. It never ceased to prevail, in a manner more or less distinct, through all the pagan world, from a period long anterior to Moses, to the auspicious night when the Magi, guided by a supernatural meteor, came from the East seeking the Star destined to elevate Israel and overthrow idolatry. Who is this Saviour—the desire of all nations—the true Messiah, sent of God? We have but one response, and shall never need another—Jesus Christ, who was all that the nations expected Him to be, all that the prophets declared He would be, the true Son of God, begotten from eternity, His Wisdom and His Word, incarnate and Divine.—*E. L. Magoon.*

2 In consideration of the state of the world, political, moral, and religious.

[13363] The birth of Christ was in the fulness of time, if we consider the then political state of the world. The world, in the most early ages, was divided into small independent states, differing from each other in language, manners, laws, and religion. The shock of so many opposite interests, the interfering of so many contrary views, occasioned the most violent convulsions and disorders; perpetual discord subsisted between these rival states, and hostility and bloodshed never ceased. Commerce had not hitherto united mankind and opened the communication of one nation with another; voyages into remote countries were very rare; men moved in a narrow circle, little acquainted with anything beyond the limits of their own small territory. At last the Roman ambition undertook the arduous enterprise of conquering the world. They trod down the kingdoms—according to Daniel's prophetic description, by their exceeding strength they devoured the whole earth (Dan. vii. 7–23). However, by enslaving the world they civilized it, and while they oppressed mankind they united them together; the same laws were everywhere established, and

the same languages understood; men approached nearer to one another in sentiments and manners, and the intercourse between the most distant corners of the earth was rendered secure and agreeable. Satiated with victory, the first emperors abandoned all thoughts of new conquests; peace, an unknown blessing, was enjoyed throughout that vast empire. . . . The disciples of Christ, thus favoured by the union and peace of the Roman Empire, executed their commission with great advantage. The success and rapidity with which they diffused the knowledge of His advent over the world are astonishing. Nations were now accessible which formerly had been unknown. Under this situation, into which the providence of God had brought the world, the joyful sound in a few years reached those remote corners of the earth into which it could not otherwise have penetrated for many ages. Thus the Roman ambition and bravery paved the way, and prepared the world for the reception of the Christian doctrine.—*Edwards.*

[13364] If we consider the state of the world with regard to morals, it evidently appears that the coming of Christ was at the most appropriate time. The Romans, by subduing the world, lost their own liberty. Many vices, engendered or nourished by prosperity, delivered them over to the vilest race of tyrants that ever afflicted or disgraced human nature. The colours are not too strong which the apostle employs in drawing the character of that age (Eph. iv. 17, 19). In this time of universal corruption did the wisdom of God manifest the Christian revelation to the world. What the wisdom of men could do for the encouragement of virtue in a corrupt world had been tried during several ages, and all human devices were found by experience to be of very small avail, so that no juncture could be more proper for publishing a religion, which, independent of human laws and institutions, explains the principles of morals with admirable perspicuity, and enforces the practice of them by most persuasive arguments.—*Ibid.*

[13365] The moral life of the world slanted downward throughout the ages; and at the time Jesus Christ was born, it had reached the lowest possible stage of degradation. In Palestine religion was a whited sepulchre, full of filthiness and dead men's bones; there was neither life nor warmth nor beauty left, nothing but dead men's bones. And among the heathen the moral sense was well-nigh obliterated, morality had been swamped in vice and irreligion. Read the concluding paragraph in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; can you conceive a darker picture? can the most impure imagination add one shade to its darkness, or one feature to its horrors? Sins are mentioned, foul, gross, horrible, which happily have been stamped out of modern life. The course of the world was downward. But there is a line of demarcation sharply drawn across history; a new era was born differing widely from all previous eras; modern civilization is not willing to go back more than one thousand eight hundred and eighty-four years to find its fountain-head; we make but little more count of the years before the Incarnation than of the years before the Flood; they form no part of the real progress of the race. In the first century of our era something happened which stopped the downward headlong career, and changed the entire drift of history.—*J. C. Jones.*

[13366] The Jews seem to have been deeply tinctured with superstition. Delighted with the ceremonial prescriptions of the law, they utterly neglected the moral. While the Pharisees undermined religion on the one hand by their vain traditions and wretched interpretations of the law, the Sadducees denied the immortality of the soul, and overturned the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, so that between them the knowledge and power of true religion were entirely destroyed. But the deplorable situation of the heathen world called still more loudly for an immediate interposal of the Divine hand. The characters of their heathen deities were infamous, and their religious worship consisted frequently in the vilest and most shameful rites. According to the apostle's observation, they "were in all things too superstitious." Stately temples, expensive sacrifices, pompous ceremonies, magnificent festivals, with all the other circumstances of show and splendour, were the objects which false religion presented to its votaries; but just notions of God, obedience to His moral laws, purity of heart, and sanctity of life, were not once mentioned as ingredients in religious service. Rome adopted the gods of almost every nation whom she had conquered, and opened her temples to the grossest superstition of the most barbarous people. Her foolish heart being darkened, she changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man (Rom. i. 21, 23). No period, therefore, can be mentioned when instructions would have been more seasonable and necessary; and no wonder that those who were looking for salvation should joyfully exclaim, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people."—*Edwards.*

V. The Power of its Manifestation.

1 Original, stupendous, influential, and abiding.

[13367] The world had never seen the like of it before. The Greek idea of an incarnation of the Deity was a mere conceit, without any complete embodiment of form in their own minds, and resting upon no authoritative enunciation. Even the enlightened Jewish mind was altogether unprepared for any such manifestation; and, in point of fact, shut its eye to it when it appeared. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." "The world knew

Him not." The world did not expect such an incarnation of the Deity; and when the grand fact was announced, it took men completely by surprise. We need not wonder, however, at the growth and extent of human astonishment in regard to the doctrine itself; the fact is, that the history of the race presents to our own gaze a series of such astonishments—a state of things which is going on still. The Almighty is ever original in His methods of procedure. He has authenticated His own originality: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord." He is ever making advances on the genius of man. He is ever developing new methods of procedure. He is constantly taking man by surprise. Keen philosophic insight observes a thousand novelties in nature—in Providence—in redemption—and in the government of the world. Men are ever discovering something new, making fresh manifestations in the world of nature, or art, or philosophy; but all such manifestations are eclipsed by the world-encircling splendour of the incarnation of the Son of God! It is the fact of facts. It is the climax of wonderfulness and originality. Oh! matter of astonishment is this for angels, and a subject of eternal interest to man. This, then, is the grand originality: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." This is "the mystery of godliness."—*John Tesseyman.*

[13368] There are manifestations in the world of art. The genius of a Raffaelle, an Angelo, or a Newton sparkles with brightness. The manifestations of poetic fire in a Homer or a Milton are wonderful indeed. There are bright coruscations of splendour in the rising and setting sun. Nature constantly travails in birth, and brings forth new forms of loveliness and beauty. This is the advent of Him who is the origin of all human greatness. He is brighter than the sun—purer and fairer than the stars. It is the Lord of creation—the "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

This is the grandest manifestation: (1) Because it is a manifestation of infinite wisdom; (2) Of Divine compassion; (3) Of the righteousness of God in the salvation of the lost; (4) Of the moral glory of the Godhead; (5) A manifestation of great mercy to meet the helplessness of human misery.—*Ibid.*

[13369] How powerful is the influence of the sun in giving life, health, and beauty, to the objects of nature! How powerful is the action of the moon upon the ocean waters! How powerful the attraction of the planets! We may note also the powerfulness of human eloquence in swaying the popular assembly, and in bringing men over to the same opinion as that we ourselves entertain. But here we have a manifestation of power which out-reaches all other. It is a Divine power. It is a glorious power. It is an infinite power. It is a righteous power. It is a power regulated by wisdom, and elaborated by mercy. It is moral in its nature. It has to do with human hearts. The power of the incarnation, in connection with the death and resurrection of Christ, is destined to put into the world a new spiritual life, and will attract the human race to the cross, in order that, ultimately, it may be uplifted to the throne!

Of material manifestations, the temple of Diana, the temple of Jerusalem, the elaborate magnificences of Babylon and Persia, of Greece and Rome, have passed away. Of the manifestations of genius, the statues of Phidias, the pictures of Angelo, and the sublime effusions of Homer, are destined to pass away. The stupendous facts of history grow misty with ages; and all things of human origin are floating down the stream of time, and will, by and by, be carried into the great ocean beyond, and be lost to human sight. But the fact of the text is destined to live, and will survive all works of art, and all facts of mere human history. It is an eternal fact. Time cannot cause it to be forgotten; the lapse of ages cannot consign it to the gulf of oblivion.—*Ibid.*

VI. Its Grand Purpose and Design.

1 **To restore to human nature at large the capacity for union with God.**

[13370] Christ, as Mediator between two, puts on man that He may lead him to the Father. Christ willed to become what man is, in order that man may have power to become what Christ is. The Jews also knew that Christ should come. Continually, by the voice of the prophets, were the tidings of Him renewed to them.—*St. Cyprian.*

[13371] A chief consequence of the fall of man was that it necessitated the propagation in all men of the likeness of their fallen forefather, instead of that of the image of God; and up to the time of the incarnation no remedy had been found by which this continuous force of the fall could be counteracted. Thus the relation between God and man had become changed, not only in Adam, but in all his posterity. Human nature was not as God had created it, but as sin had changed it; and original sin was a constant bar between it and union with God. Christ coming into the world with human nature received from the substance of a virgin, was never brought under the influence of those circumstances by which original sin is propagated, and He, therefore, represented human nature in its original relation to God—*i.e.*, as it existed before the Fall. . . . Man in soul, and man in body, but *He was man unfallen.* . . . In His one individual person, the Holy Jesus had brought back human nature to its original starting-point, to the moral place and condition in which its Creator had originally set it. He was the representative of manhood in such perfection as man had never attained to since men had been born of women. The image of God was to be traced out perfectly in this "Holy Thing," and

hence He was a second perfect man, a "Second Adam," possessed of such a nature as the first had when "God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good." It was this exceptional and original purity which qualified Christ to become an offering for the sin of the world.—*Blunt's Doctrinal and Historical Theology.*

[13372] The taking on Himself of our flesh by the Eternal Word was no makeshift to meet a mighty, yet still a particular emergent, need; a need which, conceding the liberty of man's will and that it was possible for him to have continued in his first state of obedience, might never have occurred. It was not a mere result and reparation of the Fall, such an act as, except for that, would never have been; but lay bedded at a far deeper depth in the counsels of God for the glory of His Son, and the exaltation of that race formed in His image and His likeness. For against those who regard the incarnation as an arbitrary, or as merely an historic, event, and not an ideal one as well, we may well urge this weighty consideration, that the Son of God did not in and after His ascension strip off this human nature again; He did not regard His humanity as a robe, to be worn for a while and then laid aside; the convenient form of His manifestation, so long as He was conversing with men upon earth, but the fitness of which had with that conversation passed away. So far from this, we know on the contrary that He assumed our nature for ever, married it to Himself, glorified it with His own glory, carried it as the form of His eternal subsistence into the world of angels, before the presence of His Father. Had there been anything accidental here, had the assumption of our nature been an afterthought (I speak as a man), this marriage of the Son of God with that nature could scarcely be conceived. He could hardly have so taken it—taken it, that is, for ever—unless it had possessed an ideal as well as an historic fitness; unless pre-established harmonies had existed, such harmonies as only a Divine intention could have brought about between the one and the other.—*Abp. Trench.*

[13373] Every unfulfilled aspiration of humanity in the past; all partial representation of perfect character; all sacrifices, nay, even those of idolatry, point to the fulfilment of what we want, the answer to every longing—the type of perfect humanity, the Lord Jesus Christ.—*F. W. Robertson.*

[13374] He is God as well as man in one mysterious Person, and thus He is qualified not only to represent the human race, but to do so in such a manner as to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to restore man to his original intercourse with God.—*British Quarterly Review*, 1867.

VII. Its Representativeness.

[13375] If the contemplation of the universe presses upon us the question, What is man? and gives no answer to the question in which we can without difficulty acquiesce, no answer which reconciles the conflicting evidence of his greatness and his insignificance, or which gives an intelligible theory of the distinction between his relation to God and that of other creatures, then we find in the birth of Christ the very answer we need. The Word, who was with God and was God, became flesh: the Son of God became the Son of man. Then men *are* precious in the eyes of God: the race of man is glorified in the manhood of Christ: and each individual man may rejoice when he remembers that he is clothed in flesh, which God Himself condescended to assume.—*Bp. Harvey Goodwin*, 1855.

[13376] The relation of Christ to mankind, which qualifies Him to be their representative in the great work of redemption, we consider to be His assumption of our nature. He became bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, and blood of our blood. "As the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He Himself took part of the same." He became our kinsman, our brother, our elder brother. He not only became a man, but *the* man, and therefore had a more intimate relation to the human race than any other member of the great family. He is the pattern man, in whom the complete idea of humanity is projected into time and space. Hence "His individuality is related to that of every other human being as the centre of the circle to every point of the periphery." We often speak of representative men—men who pre-eminently exhibit the mental and moral characteristics of the nations to which they belong. History records the names of many such representative personages. Christ upon far higher and truer grounds is the representative of *all* mankind, for He possessed our nature in its most comprehensive and consummate form. He was neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond, or free; but He was humanity in its most unrestricted, enlarged, and ideal manifestation. "He was the chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely." So that, on the ground of His humanity alone, none else could have been chosen with equal propriety to be the new head of the human race.—*British Quarterly Review*, 1867.

VIII. Its Relations.

1 To the creation.

[13377] It is the glory of the world, that He who formed it dwelt on it: of the air, that He breathed in it; of the sun, that it shone on Him; of the ground, that it bare Him; of the sea, that He walked on it; of the elements, that they nourished Him; of the waters, that they refreshed Him; of us men, that He lived and died among us; yea, that He lived and

died for us; that He assumed our flesh and blood, and carried it to the highest heavens, where it shines as the eternal ornament and wonder of the creation of God. It gives also a lustre to Providence. It is the chief event that adorns the records of time, and enlivens the history of the universe. It is the glory of the various great lines of Providence, that they point at this as their centre; that they prepared the way for its coming; that, after its coming, they are subservient to the ends of it, though in a way indeed to us at present mysterious and unsearchable. Thus we know that they either fulfil the promises of the crucified Jesus or His threatenings, and show either the happiness of receiving Him or the misery of rejecting Him.—*Maclaurin.*

2 To the atonement.

[13378] As the union of the Divine and human nature took place at the incarnation of our Lord, we may regard that event as the principal part of our redemption. When the Word was made flesh, the separation between God and man was at an end, although the sufferings that followed were required to complete the reconciliation between them. The atonement then began at the incarnation.—*Abp. Thomson.*

[13379] The Christian scheme of salvation through incarnate God is the world's centre of gravity, towards which everything tends; its own centre of gravity is the cross; for it is not "Christ" simply, but "Christ crucified," whom we preach. Not the Person constituted by pure birth of Mary is the power of God unto salvation, but that Person as offered, slain, and raised again. Modern thought is strong, because it recognizes the incarnation, taken largely, as the grandest of all facts; but it is weak, because it fails to see the necessary issue of the Advent in the work of the cross. It has no eyes for the sublime condition of righteousness in order to salvation. Had the mere out-putting of spiritual power upon us sufficed to raise us from sin, there need have come no Person from the bosom of God, and there need have been no crucifixion. The very fact that our Divine helper came in human form showed that there was a man's work to be done before God's help could be extended. Work of some kind required to be done in human nature on the behalf of human souls; and for the doing of that He was born.—*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*

[13380] We fasten, first of all, upon the fact—a fact which is learned equally from each of the three cases of legal redemption—that none but a kinsman could fill the office of Goel or Redeemer. It was not enough that an individual might be ready to come forward on behalf of the impoverished Israelite. Had he the right of the closest kinsmanship? If not, the law altogether refused to allow the interposition; its fundamental principle, in all such cases, appearing to have been that kinsmanship was indispensable to the constitution of a redeemer. And who sees not that in laying down and adhering to such a principle as this, the law taught impressively the lesson that He who should arise, the Goel of a lost world, must be bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh? It would have been nothing that rank upon rank of celestial intelligence should rush eagerly forwards, and compassionating the ruined estate of our race, offer to devote their magnificent energies to improving its condition. Were they the kinsmen of the lost? Could they make out relationship? Could they prove that there existed between themselves and the fallen any of that alliance which results from community of nature? Then an angel, not being a kinsman, could not be a redeemer. None but a man could be the Goel of man—such was the truth which the law emphatically taught, when refusing, in any case, to concede to a stranger the right of redemption. —*Henry Melvill, B.D.*

3 To the resurrection.

[13381] What is the spiritual principle or power which actualizes or renders into living fact the promise of the incarnation? Is it presented to us in any symbolic form, so that by adding it to the symbol of the incarnation we may obtain a complete view of the symbolic gospel, both as to its form and its begetting cause? Such we have in the resurrection of Jesus. It is this fact which has made the promise of the incarnation a spiritual reality, and brought it as a living experience within the reach of men. The resurrection of Jesus completes the revelation which begins with the incarnation of God in Him; and it is, further, the fact which realizes for men all the promise of the incarnation. It is the form, which the spiritual power that turns the promise of the incarnation into spiritual reality, must assume in order to produce this effect. The truth for man, shadowed forth in the incarnation of God, were a dream but for the resurrection of Jesus, which has made it a reality. The resurrection of Jesus is the actualizing and interpretive principle of the incarnation.—*Rev. Robert Lorimer, M.A.*

IX. Its Necessity to Human Nature.

[13382] We should have been simply terrified if, when the curtains of heaven were withdrawn for the advent of the Deity, the Divine Son had come forth from the mysterious solitude of eternity clothed with that ineffable glory and dazzling radiance which no mortal eye can look upon. Guilty men would have fled affrighted at such an apparition, and desired nothing so greatly as that the rocks and hills might cover and hide them away from His sight. But He came not in the unclouded splendour of divinity. He voluntarily laid aside such glories as would have terrified those He came to seek and to save, even at the cost of making Himself of no reputation. He appeared amongst men as a man, participating in man's estate, enduring the

ills which are the common lot of all, an inheritor of our woes, tempted as we are tempted, hungering as we hunger, thirsting as we thirst, weary as we are weary, stooping so very low that He was born in a manger and died upon a cross. Thus He convinces us of His solicitude for us; thus He displays His wonderful yearning love towards us; and thus He presents Himself—His divinity robed under, not concealed, but shining luminously through the veil of His humanity—in such a guise that we may look upon Him, and looking, love, and loving, follow.—*H. M. J.*

[13383] If we really and truly have a Father, we must be able to clasp His feet in our penitence, and to lean on His breast in our weary sorrowfulness. If He be God, we must see exhibitions of what we believe to be Divine. If He be glorious, we must see His glory. It must shine in something or in some persons whom we can apprehend, or else we can never have knowledge of the glory of God. Where does that glory shine? Paul says, "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ."—*Deems.*

[13384] In order to salvation, *i.e.*, in order to his highest excellency and bliss, man must be conformed morally to God. Such conformity can be wrought in the soul only by sympathy with God, or the feeling of His conscious personal presence applying itself directly to the soul. Such sympathy can be created only by God's revelation of Himself. (1) By a person, and (2) by a human person, *i.e.*, one which, while representing truly the Divine nature, is exhibited also as living, acting, speaking, feeling, suffering under human limitations and conditions.—*T. M. Post, D.D.*

[13385] The great mass of mankind must have images. The strong tendency of the multitude in all ages and nations to idolatry can be explained on no other principle. The first inhabitants of Greece, there is every reason to believe, worshipped one invisible deity. But the necessity of having something more definite to adore produced, in a few centuries, the innumerable crowds of gods and goddesses. In like manner, the ancient Persians thought it impious to exhibit the Creator under a human form. Yet even these transferred to the sun the worship which speculatively they considered due only to the supreme mind. The history of the Jews is the record of a continual struggle between pure theism, supported by the most terrible sanctions, and the strangely fascinating desire of having some visible and tangible object of adoration. Perhaps none of the secondary causes which Gibbon has assigned for the rapidity with which Christianity spread over the world, while Judaism scarcely ever acquired a proselyte, operated more powerfully than this feeling. God, the uncreated, the incomprehensible, the invisible, attracted few worshippers; a philosopher might adore so noble a conception, but the crowd turned away in disgust from words which created no image to their minds. It was before the Deity, embodied in a human form, walking among men, partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in the manger, bleeding on the cross, that the prejudices of the synagogue, and the doubts of the academy, and the pride of the portico, and the fasces of the lictors, and the swords of thirty legions were humbled in the dust.—*Macaulay.*

[13386] Any presentation of God as a Spirit, which leads men to look upon Him as a being vague and indefinite, of whom men can form no true conception, is a false presentation. Any presentation of God as an official personage, who sits, as it is sometimes said, in the chair of state—as a mere governor of the universe—is a false presentation. God governs the universe, but He is not a mere governor. I may control men by my personal influence, but I am not captain. I am not elected to anything. I do not act under any written law or constitution. So far as I control them, I do it by the play of my mind on theirs. I touch their interests, their sympathies, their enthusiasm. God governs the universe, not by His laws, so called, but by Himself—by the direct throb of His soul. And, I repeat, any view of God which presents Him merely as an official personage, or in any way that leaves out *personality*, heart, sympathy, soul, is false!

There is nothing that can enter into the conception of man which is so sweet and glorious as the conduct and nature of God when viewed in the light of the higher ranges of human experience. I never bless God so much as when I think that He came into the world to search for me and save me; and this fact never comes to me as a living reality that I do not long to stand, with all the intelligences of the universe, and say, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, and to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." I can worship such an One! A throne I cannot worship, unless it be a throne on which a heart sits. A soul I can worship; a head I cannot; a hand I cannot; a sceptre I cannot; but a heart I can. Before a heart I can bow down, and feel that in bowing down I am for ever and for ever lifted up.—*H. Ward Beecher.*

[13387] Consider how men are touched and moved. Mere words have but comparatively little influence over us. Inferences, deductions, the whole train of logic may pass through our minds without once reaching the heart. We may be convinced that there is a God, and that He is wise and good, by arguments drawn from the facts of nature and from the human story; and yet no one of these arguments shall kindle any flame of love in us, or elicit any response of reverence and affection. It is by actions, and actions which we can see and comprehend, that we are really kindled and moved. The cry of a child or the sigh of a woman touches

us far more profoundly than the most cogent demonstration or the most eloquent harangue. The sight of an heroic deed fires and engrosses us as no mere description of even far greater heroism would do. So that, if we are to be moved by God, if we are to be kindled into a love for Him by which our evil lusts may be expelled, God must show Himself to us. If the world is to be kindled into love for Him, and this love is to become its ruling affection, He must come and dwell in the world. He must be seen, and heard, and handled. He must do, under our very eyes, deeds of heroic love and self-sacrifice which we can never forget, never cease to honour and admire. He *has* come, He *has* dwelt among us, lived with us, died for us. God *was* in Christ, to meet our need, to reveal His kindness and love toward us and toward all men. The infirmity of *our* nature required His advent; the goodness of *His* nature prompted His advent. We needed Him, and He came. Men saw Him, and were conquered. —*British Quarterly Review.*

X. Its Demonstrations.

1 The love of God in Christ.

[13388] The incarnation bridges over the abyss which opens in our thought between earth and heaven; it brings the Almighty, the all-wise, illimitable Being, down to the minds and hearts of His reasonable creatures. The Word made flesh is God condescending to our finite capacities; and this condescension has issued in a clear strong sense of the being and attributes of God, such as is not found beyond the bounds of Christendom. The last prayer of Jesus, that His redeemed might know the only true God, has been answered in history. . . . How profound, how varied, how fertile, is the idea of God—of His nature and of His attributes—in St. John, in St. Paul, in St. Gregory Nazianzen, in St. Augustine! How energetic is this idea —how totally is it removed from the character of an impotent speculation! How does this keen, strong sense of God's present and majestic life leave its mark upon manners, literatures, codes of law, national institutions, national characters! How utterly does its range of energy transcend any mere employment of the intellect! How does it, again and again, bend wills, and soften hearts, and change the current and drift of lives, and transfigure the souls of men! And why is this? It is because the incarnation rivets the apprehension of God on the thoughts and hearts of the Church, so that within the Church theistic truth bids defiance to those influences which tend perpetually to sap or to volatilize it elsewhere. Instead of presenting us with some fugitive abstraction inaccessible to the intellect and disappointing to the heart, the incarnation points to Jesus. Jesus is the Almighty, restraining His illimitable powers; Jesus is the Incomprehensible, voluntarily submitting to bonds; Jesus is Providence, clothed in our own flesh and blood; Jesus is the Infinite Christ, tending us with the kindly looks and tender handling of a human love; Jesus is the Eternal Wisdom, speaking out of the depths of infinite thought in a human language; Jesus is God making Himself, if I may dare so to speak, our tangible possession; He is God brought "very nigh to us, in our mouth, and in our heart;" we behold Him, we touch Him, we cling to Him, and, lo! we are partakers of the nature of Deity (2 Pet. i. 4) through our actual membership in His body, in His flesh, and in His bones (Eph. v. 30); we dwell, if we will, evermore in Him, and He in us.—*Canon Liddon.*

[13389] Let us consider that the nativity of our Lord is a grand instance, a pregnant evidence, a rich earnest of Almighty God's very great affection and benignity toward mankind; for "in this," saith St. John, "the love of God was manifested, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world;" and, "through the tender mercy of our God," sang old Zacharias, "the day-spring from on high hath visited us." This indeed is the peculiar experiment, wherein that most Divine attribute did show and signalize itself. The power of God doth brightly shine in the creation, the wisdom of God may clearly be discerned in the government of things; but the incarnation of God is that work, is that dispensation of grace, wherein the Divine goodness doth most conspicuously display itself. How indeed possibly could God have demonstrated a greater excess of kindness towards us than by thus, for our sake and good, sending His dearest Son out of His bosom into this sordid and servile estate, subjecting Him to all the infirmities of our frail nature, exposing Him to the worst inconveniences of our low condition? what expressions can signify, what comparisons can set out the stupendous vastness of this kindness? If we should imagine that a great prince should put his only son, a son most lovely, and worthily most beloved, into rags, should dismiss him from his court, should yield him up into the hardest slavery, merely to the intent that he thereby might redeem from captivity the meanest and basest of his subjects, how faint a resemblance would this be of that immense goodness, of that incomparable mercy, which in this instance the King of all the world hath declared toward us His poor vassals, His indeed unworthy rebels!—*Barrow.*

2 The dignity of man in Christ.

[13390] Man must be intrinsically of greater value than all that went before to prepare the way for him. This will serve to explain the intense interest of the angels in man, and their joy in his redemption. He is greater than they. They are complete only in him. He is destined to be their lord. "Know ye not that ye shall judge angels?" The angels are, in many accidents, superior to man in his earthly estate. But this superiority is temporary. "Thou madest him a little while inferior to the angels." Men, taken up into the Christ and glorified,

shall rank above all other created intelligences. To look to angels as mediators, interposed to join man with God, and to worship them, degrades man. To think of angels and of the physical universe as dwarfing man is robbing humanity of its prerogative and worth. The incarnation signifies that man has an inherent dignity that no hugeness of the physical universe and no grandeur of angels can equal. He has no superior, save God. He should bow the knee to none but God.—*C. P. Jennings.*

[13391] The incarnation, as a great fact, discovers the communicableness, if I may use such a word, of the relation of fatherhood and sonship, as it exists in the Godhead. It proves that it is a relation which may be communicated to a creature, and shared in by a creature. The incarnation demonstrates, by a plain palpable proof, that this relation is not like an incommunicable property or attribute of Deity, but is something in or about Deity, in which others besides the Divine persons may participate and have fellowship. For in fact the incarnation shows this relation actually communicated to humanity, and shared in by humanity, in the person of the man Christ Jesus.—*R. Candlish, D.D.*

[13392] Human nature is, at this moment, the most glorious of created natures, taken, in its assumption by the Son, into a nearness of union with the Godhead, which none other enjoys; and where our Head is, there all His true members shall in due time be. As the man Christ Jesus passed through all suffering into glory, even so His people exposed to dangers which others never knew, and made triumphant through His Spirit dwelling in them, rise to honours with which others can never be crowned; and, living monuments of all those Divine perfections which were displayed in their redemption, living records of the glory of God, they will awaken among the hosts of heaven a song which, throughout eternity, will be ever new.—*Marcus Dods, D.D.*

[13393] Christ is man at His climax. Scepticism gives up in all serious circles the claim that the founder of Christianity was a mythological personage. The mythical theory has been so completely exploded by the discussions of the last quarter of a century that we now are all agreed, so far as we are in earnest, that one human personality has appeared without sin, or, at least, without any such facts in His career that we are able to prove sin against the character. That is the stupendous outcome of modern criticism, and if the world of thought could be united in the admission of the sinlessness of Christ, immense ethical conclusions would at once become the property of all intellectual circles; for this sinless character exhibits man at his climax, and it must be that, if we are to have peace at all with our own natures, from which we never can escape while we continue to exist, we must have peace with that ideal of character which was sinless.—*Joseph Cook, D.D.*

[13394] The work of Christianity is, first, to establish the common dignity of men as men, and to place on a sure basis all purely human virtues; and next, to connect the life of men with its source and consummation and bring it into fellowship with God. Both these results are grounded on the historic facts of the gospel. —*Canon Westcott.*

[13395] Our Lord's nativity doth infer a great honour and a high preferment to us: no-wise, indeed, could mankind be so dignified, or our nature so advanced, as hereby. No wisdom can devise a way beyond this, whereby God should honour His most special favourites, or promote them to a nearness unto Himself. For hence we become allied to God, in a most strait affinity, His eternal Son being made our brother; hence, as touching the blood-royal of heaven, we do in dignity o'er-top all the creation; so that what the Psalmist uttered concerning man is verified in the most comprehensive sense, "Thou hast crowned Him with glory and honour, and hast set Him over the works of Thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet." For now the Son of man, being also the Son of God, is the Head of all principality and power, is the Lord of all things, is the sovereign Prince of all the world; is placed far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. That is a peculiar honour to which the highest angels cannot pretend; for "He took not the nature of angels, but He took the seed of Abraham;" whence those noble creatures are become in a manner inferior to poor us; and, according to just obligation, willingly to adore our nature; for, "when God brought His first-begotten Son into the world, He said, Let all the angels of God worship Him." Is not indeed our flesh become the true Shekinah, the everlasting place of the supreme Majesty, "wherein the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily;" as the most holy shrine of the divinity; as the orb of inaccessible light; as more than all this, if more could be expressed, or if we could expound that text, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt in us?" May not our soul worthily claim the highest respect, all whose faculties, being endued with unmeasurable participations of the Holy Spirit, have been tuned to a perfect harmony with the all-wise understanding and the most pure will of God?—*Barrow.*

[13396] By this union with Deity there has been conferred upon our whole race the greatest honour of which created substance is susceptible. For that manhood should thus have been taken into Godhead shows that there was between them such compatibility and accordance as stamps the lower nature with that truth which belongs to the very essence of the higher. It has sometimes been disputed whether the de-

cisions of reason and the decrees of conscience have any proper authority, or have only such semblance of reality as belongs to our transitory state. That they should have been present in Him in whom they were matured, purified, exalted, and should thus have harmonized with those perfect lines of truth which radiate from the throne of God, is the best evidence of their reality. For had God been pleased to employ the organs of some inferior animal, as is once recorded in Holy Writ, for the expression of His will, such nature had not been susceptible of that personal union with Him which is set forth in the incarnation of Christ. But that man was found susceptible of it — that his faculties required to be exalted, not destroyed— shows that the traces of that image in which he was created had not been obliterated from his soul.—*Archibald Wilberforce.*

[13397] We are ever to remember that in Jesus Christ our nature was intimately united with divinity the most exalted, and that in the triumphant Redeemer humanity is already enthroned in heaven. He came to unfold to mankind their capacities of greatness, to impart generous conceptions and reveal the splendid destiny that awaited them, to awaken aspirations after a nobler character and a higher being, to kindle in their bosoms a love for all the virtues embodied in Himself, and throw wide open before them the gates which invite to life without a pang, and glory without a cloud.—*E. L. Magoon.*

XI. Its Benefits.

[13398] Before the incarnation there was a great gulf fixed between God and man. Man could think about God; he could pray to God; he could practise a certain measure of obedience to God's will; but, in his best moments, man was conscious of his utter separateness from God as the perfect moral Being. He was conscious of sin, and this consciousness meant nothing less than separation from the All-holy. The incarnation of Jesus Christ was a bridge across the chasm which thus had parted earth and heaven. On the one hand, and from everlasting, Jesus Christ was of one substance with the Father, very and eternal God. On the other, He was made very man, of the substance of the Virgin Mary, His mother. As the collect says, He took man's nature upon Him. When He had already existed for an eternity, He folded around Him, He made His own, a created form, a human body and a human soul, to be for ever united to His eternal Godhead. Through this, His human nature, He acts on God's behalf upon mankind. Through this, His human nature, He pleads for man before the majesty of God, and thus there is "one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." It is as man that He mediates between the Creator and the creature, between sinners and the All-holy; but His Godhead secures to His mediation its commanding power. If He were not human we at this moment should be unrepresented in heaven, where He ever liveth to make intercession for us. If He were not Divine it would be impossible to say why His death upon the cross should have infinite merit, or why the body of Christ, which was given for us, should now in the Holy Sacrament preserve our bodies and our souls unto everlasting life. At one and the same moment He is, as Mediator, in the bosom of the Godhead and in the closest contact with the souls of His redeemed; and this is a result of His entrance in a created form into our human world as the everlasting Son, yet, withal, as the child of Mary. That this is the deepest meaning of Christmas and of the birth of Christ is implied in the name assigned in prophecy to the Virgin's Son—the sublime, the glorious name, Emmanuel. From the day of the nativity God was seen to be with men, not simply as heretofore, as the omnipresent, but under new and more intimate conditions. From the day of the nativity there was a change in the relations between earth and heaven. To be one with Christ was to be one with God, and this union with God through Christ is the secret and basis of the new kingdom of souls which Christ has founded, and in which He reigns. Who shall describe the wealth of spiritual and moral power which dates from the appearance of the Incarnate Son in this our human world as our wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption? Here and there we see, as by glimpses through the clouds, some streaks of the glory of this, the invisible kingdom of souls; but only most assuredly in another life shall we understand at all approximately what it has meant—what it means—for millions of our race. —*Canon Liddon.*

[13399] Through this doctrine only has the Godhead been revealed to us under that nobler character, in which we have learned to recognize Him. For it is this truth which has made that mighty alteration in the opinions of men, on which our noblest intellectual attainments are dependent. It is the incarnation of Christ our Lord which has raised us as well above the carnal anthropology of the Greeks, as above the grotesque speculations of the Brahmins. This principle it is which has so blended justice, mercy, and truth, with the omnipotence, omniscience, and eternity of God, as to enable man to respond to the best aspirations of his nature.—*Archibald Wilberforce.*

[13400] All the work of our redemption was in a manner achieved, when our Saviour did appear; His incarnation was the great step toward it; as being an act of the humblest obedience and of the highest merit that could anywise be performed, for satisfying the justice of God, and winning His favour toward us: His taking up life may well seem more meritorious than His laying it down, and the chief passion which He could ever undergo. His death was a passion, great as death could be; His life also was a continual passion, or exercise of huge

patience; but His birth seemeth to be the greatest and strangest passion of all, involving the lowest submission and the deepest suffering. What nobler sacrifice could there be than God's offering Himself up to mortality, to infirmity, to slavery? What obedience can be thought of comparable to that which He did express when He said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. I came down, not that I might do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me?"—*Barrow.*

[13401] To superficial reason, the incarnation has seemed a thing incredible. To faith it seems more reasonable that God, having vouchsafed to make intelligent creatures capable of His love, should not keep them apart from Himself, to adore only and admire and love Him from without, but that He united them to Himself by the closest union which was possible between the creature and the Creator, and, having taken the manhood into God, "gathered together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, in Him in whom we also have obtained an inheritance."—*Pusey.*

[13402] The consequence to man of all direct and impersonal modes of theanthropic union is, the loss of a truly human consciousness, without the compensation of a Divine one gained, a blank of all conscious life. But in the personal and mediatorial method, the spiritual consciousness of man is intensified and elevated, and the very spirit and tone of the relation is that of perfect filiality. He who founded this relation between God and man, and threw it open to man, filled it all while He was manifested on earth, with the light of perfect human sonship to God. No confession of sin ever fell from the lips of the man Christ Jesus. No spot defiled His obedience. Ere He was incarnate, He hailed with rapture the prospect of it, as the opportunity of rendering that perfect obedience in the flesh which should effect the redemption of men, crying, "A body hast thou prepared me." "I delight to do Thy will, O my God."—*Rev. Robert Lorimer, M.A.*

XII. Place of the Doctrine in the Christian Scheme.

[13403] We are not left to speculate what is the fundamental truth of faith—the article of a standing or falling Christianity. According to the Apostle John, it is that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (1 John iv. 2, 3), and whosoever confesses it is of God. Other truths may be vital, but this is the most vital of all. It is the one fact from which all the distinctive doctrines of Christianity spring. Christianity is the whole, and the incarnation is the centre. Or it may be compared to the root, and the attaching doctrines to the stem and branches. Destroy the root, and the tree decays; take away the incarnation, and Christianity is gone. He that stumbles here, stumbles at the threshold of the faith.—*John Baird, D.D.*

[13404] A great deal of the philosophical speculation of the present day is a simple ignoring of the great cardinal doctrines of Scripture, and notably that which is the subject of the present article. Priests and infidels are enemies of coordinate standing in regard to the subject under consideration. The former have buried it beneath a load of superstitions; the latter have relegated it to the limbo of a discarded theology, regarding it as an unreasonable demand upon the mental powers, as an ignorant conceit, and a most mischievous credulity. But the doctrine has maintained itself through all the ages, notwithstanding the superstitions of some, and the scepticism of others; and it still abides. It is the great central doctrine of Scripture, around which all the rest revolve in obedient order. It is the great manifestation.—*John Tesseyman.*

[13405] It has sometimes been asked why our Lord's atonement is not inserted in the Creed in such express words as is His incarnation. The reason is, that our Lord's atonement may be admitted in words, although those who use them attach no Christian sense to the doctrine which they acknowledge; whereas if the doctrine of our Lord's incarnation is once truly accepted, His mediation follows as its necessary result. So that the Church was guided by Divine wisdom, to make this article of our Lord's real nature the criterion of her belief, the "Articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ:" it holds a leading place in the profession which in all ages has been required at baptism; and the early believers gave a token of their reverence when, on declaring that He "was made man," they were wont, with one consent, to bow the knee and worship.—*R. J. Wilberforce.*

XIII. Apologetic Value and Importance of the Doctrine.

[13406] The apologetic value of the doctrine of the incarnation should not be altogether ignored in the consideration of the relations which that dogma sustains to some of the topics of the present day. To make this statement, however, is to expose oneself to the cavil of the small thinker with a list of fallacies in his head, who will say, "Oh, you reason in a circle; you prove the incarnation by the Bible, and then the Bible by the incarnation." Well suppose we do! Suppose that by one set of arguments and evidences it is shown that the Bible is a supernatural book, and, being such, that a sound exegesis shuts us up to belief in the divinity of our Lord; and suppose, again, that the divinity of Christ regarded as a unity, hypotheses will explain the structural unity of the Old and New Testaments, and leave no room for doubt that the Old Testament and also the New were constructed with reference to a plan of such magnitude that a supernatural authorship is the only satisfactory explanation—what harm is done? What serious violation of the laws of correct thinking has been committed? And it is precisely this double course which is open to the

student of the Bible. As a dogmatician, he may, and he very properly will, say, "The Bible teaches the divinity of Christ," and proceed to maintain his position by citing the arguments and the proof-texts with which we are all familiar; but as an apologist, he will pursue a different course. Applying to Scripture the argument of design, he will say that it was constructed upon a plan which must have existed in a single mind before it was executed in the progressive publication of the separate books of the Bible. The incarnation is a hypothesis which gives unity to the Bible, which reveals the fact that through the volume from Genesis to Revelation "the same increasing purpose runs." The students of the "higher criticism" are not given to an undue appreciation of the organic character of Scripture. They are too busy with a microscopic study of the tissues to see the symmetry of the entire organism. It must be left to other specialists who have exceptional training to reply to them who deny the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy, or who believe in two Isaiahs, and dispute the unity of the Book of the Prophecies of Zechariah. Here is a fact which must strike the eye of even a common observer. The Old Testament is a congruous body of doctrine culminating in Christ; the New Testament is a coherent body of doctrine crystallizing around the person of Christ. What is the incarnation but the synthesis of the teaching of the Old Testament? and what is the New Testament but an unfolding of the ideas which are wrapped up in the doctrine of the incarnation? How did this happen? The doctrine of the incarnation is not a patch put into the web of the Old Testament by human hands; if it had been, it would have been so palpable that no one would ever have denied that the Bible contains it. But it is woven so delicately into the structure of the sacred books, that though you see the Incarnate Christ as the central figure of the Bible, it requires patient study and profound thought to see how this idea runs through and gives unity to the whole. And now we ask, How did it happen? Our representative thinkers of the most advanced infidelity will not ask us to believe that organisms grow by chance. We are indebted to them for their concessions to the old theistic proof, even though they impute to an unconscious intelligence working in the organism what we more rationally account for by believing in a personal God. We may believe that the Bible is not a Divine Book when we believe that a blind intelligence forms the eye, and adapts the uses of the eye to its environment, and, working throughout nature, has unconsciously built up what we call the cosmos. When we can accept this Calvinism without Christ, the theory of an unconscious impersonal Intelligence, this doctrine of predestination without a purposing mind, this fatalistic pantheism as a theory of the universe, we may consent to deny the supernatural origin of the Bible. But the reasons which lead us to believe that God made the world should lead us just as well to the conclusion that God made the Bible. There is design in history, and free intelligences are blind weavers of the great web of human destiny; but we must believe that these intelligences are controlled by the directing mind of God, or there is no explanation of the plan which history reveals. We may believe that the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy, and that the prophet was a blind worker in the development of a plan to which so many workers contributed; but behind the prophet we must place the inspiration of the prophet, and superior to the prophet, the Spirit who shaped his visions, and whose word was on his tongue.—*Rev. Professor Patton.*

[13407] Everywhere it is the Churches that have fast hold on the truth of the incarnation which are able to maintain some glow in their vital fire. It is a firm grasp of this truth which has been the strength of the leaders who have stirred those great revivals of the stagnant life of Christendom, which form new eras in the development of the masses of the people, from the Cistercian revival under Bernard, the Mendicant revival under Francis, through Luther and Wesley, to the Eglise Libre of the Canton de Vaud. While the Churches that forsake it are conscious of a coldness, a dulness, a want of vital heat and propagating power, which is profoundly significant, and is full of a solemn warning to those who dream that the life of a Christian man, or of a Christian Church, can be permanently nourished on any poorer bread than the gospel of Emmanuel, God with us.—*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*

[13408] Relinquish the fact of the incarnation of God in Jesus, and what solid foundation is left man for cherishing the bold thought of his Christian sonship—a thought which in natural and ethical grandeur immeasurably transcends the undefined thought of Hebrew seers and pagan poets and philosophers? Granting that the idea of the relationship was in the possession of both parties, yet the thought that "they also were the offspring of God" was with the latter as the inference at best of a crude because naturalistic theory of the union between God and man; while, in the case of the former, it was so occasional in its use, coming from the lips of psalmist and prophet, only as the expression of a rare impassionedness or tenderness, that the thought of Divine Fatherhood and human sonship cannot be regarded as a definite article of Old Testament theology.—*Rev. Robert Lorimer, M.A.*

XIV. Question raised on the Subject: Was the Incarnation necessary apart from the Existence of Sin?

1 The question as treated by the schoolmen.

[13409] It was quite customary in this country, not very long ago, to pronounce indiscriminate censures on the schoolmen, and to

hold them up to derision. The question, "How many angels could stand on the point of a needle?" which is the example given by Dr. Thomas Brown of the frivolousness of their inquiries, must appear to every person acquainted with their writings to be as unfair a representation of them as the paring of a nail would be of the marvellous structure of the human body, or as a splinter of stone would be of the architecture of a great building. Many of the speculations of the schoolmen were of a high character, and such as could only have been undertaken by intellects of the first order, in vigour, in acuteness, and in capacity, for continuous and prolonged exertion. . . . But never was there a better example of "sound knowledge putrefying and turning into a number of subtle, idle, and vermicular questions" than in the discussions of the schoolmen upon one of the greatest of all theological questions—the incarnation of the Son of God. The beauty and grandeur of this august subject were completely dissipated by its being subjected to every possible form of inquiry, . . . and it will easily be conceived that many of these questions were frivolous, and some of them by no means free of irreverence. The most famous of all the questions started by the schoolmen respecting the incarnation was this, "Utrum si Adam non pecasset, Filius Dei, Incarnatus fuisset?" . . . In the opinion of Thomas Aquinas, it is most likely that Christ would not have become incarnate if Adam had not sinned; but even if the fall had not taken place, an incarnation would still have been among the *possibilia*. The same opinion, in some cases accompanied with individual explanations, was generally held by his followers. On the other hand, Albert the Great, Abelard, Alexander of Hales, Richard De St. Victor, Ruprecht of Deutch, and the Monk Francis Caracolus, according to Dorner, held that the incarnation was necessary apart from the existence of sin. To these might have been added Scotus, Suarez, Galatinus, and other eminent scholastics. The same opinion was also held by John Wessel.—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 1866.

2 The question as viewed by the fathers and Reformers.

[13410] This question was little, if indeed it was at all, formally agitated by the fathers. According to Dorner, Irenæus, one of the great teachers of the early Church, maintained that the incarnation would have taken place though Adam had not sinned. That Irenæus did not hold this opinion very consistently or explicitly is evident from the following quotation made by Dorner in a footnote, and from the obviously false translation which he would force upon the words, in order to coerce them into harmony with his favourite theory. "The passage" (cap. xiv. 10), says he, "'Si non haberet caro salvari, nequaquam verbum Dei caro factum esset,' is only apparently inconsistent therewith; for the first words may signify, if it had not been possible to restore humanity to its archetypal form, it would have lacked the capability of being assumed by the Logos" (Dorner, doc. ii. vol. i. 368, footnote). This is surely too much. Partiality, when carried thus far, is not only discreditable, it is weak and pitiable, and all the more so when it is done by a learned and powerful mind. It is utterly impossible to translate the above sentence so as to bring out of its words anything having the least resemblance to the meaning put on them by Dorner. The words, "Si caro non habuit salvari," are a form of expression belonging to the post-Augustan era. Precisely the same form of expression is used by Tertullian. He says, "Etiam Filius Dei mori habuit," even the Son of God required to die. And, translated in the same manner, the words of Irenæus express, in the strongest way, the very opposite of the sentiment which Dorner has endeavoured to bring out of them under torture. "If flesh had not required to be saved, the Son of God by no means would have become flesh." In the same volume, page 365, Dorner has incorrectly quoted the words of Augustine. He remarks, "Augustine indeed says also: 'Si homo non pecasset Filius Dei non esset Incarnatus.'" As authority for this quotation he gives "De Trinitate," xiii. 10. No such words, however, are to be found in that place. The same sentiment, however, is thus expressed in that place: "Nisi tamen infirmatus esset, medicum necessarum non habert." Augustine has expressed the same opinion still more strongly in various passages. "Quare venit in mundum peccatores salves facere. Alia causa non fuit quare veniret in mundum" (Augustine's Works, vol. x.).—*Ibid.*

[13411] Among the Reformers, the subject obtained some notice, not as a separate question, but in connection with the great doctrine of justification by faith. Osiander held a theory in regard to justification analogous to one which has recently been propounded in regard to adoption. He maintained that believers are justified, not by the imputation of Christ's mediatorial righteousness, but by the imputation of his own proper, personal, essential, and eternal righteousness as the Son of God (Dorner, II. ii. 107, et seq.). Calvin has devoted the greater portion of a chapter of the Institutes to the consideration of this opinion. He rebukes the unscriptural and presumptuous nature of the speculation with the unbending sternness of a judge, and refutes it with masterly ease, in his usual manner, by the simplicity of scriptural evidence, linked into a chain which can neither be cut nor broken. Calvin very strongly repudiates the idea that Christ would have become incarnate if Adam had not sinned. He even goes so far as to call it "a presuming with impious audacity to invent a new Christ." Bellarmine holds that if Adam had not sinned, Christ would probably not have come; while Petavius emphatically asserts that he certainly would not. This question continued to occupy a place, though an obscure one, in the systematic theology of the seventeenth century, as

may be seen in Turretine and others. The celebrated Malebranche, whom Sir William Hamilton has recognized as being perhaps the greatest writer that France ever produced, maintained as a philosophical opinion, and it was evidently one of his most favourite opinions, that the incarnation was necessary in order to render the world a perfect work, one every way worthy of the infinite perfection of its Creator. It does not appear that this question ever created much attention within the Protestant Church, till recently, when it has taken its place among those hybrid speculations, semi-philosophical, semi-theological, for which Germany has long been famous.—*Ibid.*

3 The question as viewed by Dr. Martensen.

[13412] We accept the essentially Christian belief that the Son of God would have been made man, and would have come into the world, even if sin had not come into the world—the belief, that when God created man after His own image, He created him in the image of His Son, in the image of the Son who was to become incarnate, so that even at the creation of man the image of Christ was present to the mind of the Creator, and was the prototype according to which man was created.—*Martensen.*

4 Dr. Candlish's theory on sonship.

[13413] The theory in question, that intelligent beings are not the sons of God by creation, and only become so by participation in the eternal Sonship of the second person of the Trinity "as it exists in the Godhead," if we give way to hypothetical reasoning, seems to require as its proper theological complement this other doctrine, that the incarnation would have been necessary in order to sonship being obtained, even although Adam had never sinned. We are fully alive to the high talent, the amazing mental dexterity, and the loftiness of moral and spiritual tone displayed by the author of that theory. And we feel perfectly assured that Dr. Candlish's own opinions on this and on all the other questions that have arisen out of the publication of his work, considered as separate questions, are perfectly and indubitably sound. But the personal opinions of an individual are one thing, and the principles or consequences involved in his theory are another, and they are often contradictory the one to the other. And with all deference to the distinguished author, if we could allow ourself to reason hypothetically, we would maintain that if the sonship of the intelligent creation entered into God's idea of universe, and if all sonship be based on the incarnation, then, upon the supposition that Adam had never sinned, it is not easy to conceive how the sonship of the intelligent creation, which entered into God's eternal counsel as part of the plan of the universe, could have been carried out except by the incarnation. As will be afterwards seen, however, we consider all speculations, founded on the supposition of a world differently constituted from the present, to be radically vicious, and that all consequences drawn from such premises are presumptuous, and utterly useless for any purpose whatever, whether theoretical or practical. We, therefore, frankly admit that Dr. Candlish is perfectly warranted in refusing the supposition that Adam had never sinned. In that case his theory must be tried by its relation to the actual world, and not by its bearing on the fortunes of one which never had, and never will have, any existence. In that case, too, his theory could not be charged with the consequence that the incarnation would have taken place though Adam had never sinned. — *British and Foreign Evangelical Review.*

5 General consideration of the matter.

(1) *Statement of the question.*

[13414] The real question is whether the incarnation properly, primarily, formally, and permanently belongs to creation or to redemption. It is not denied, on the one side, that it had to do with redemption, but it is maintained that its primary end has respect to creation, so much so that it would have taken place for creational interests, though no redemption had been required. On the other side, it is not denied that redemption has to do with creation. On the contrary, it is not barely admitted, but insisted on, that creation will be affected thereby to its remotest bounds and to all eternity. It is, however, maintained that the primary, direct, and formal end of the incarnation was the redemption of our lost world, and that all its effects upon the universe arose out of the facts of its being undertaken and accomplished for the purpose of redemption. . . . It is believed that the early Church—the Church of the Nicene and Chalcedonian creeds, and the Church in every period since—have been occupied too exclusively in examining the mode of the union between our Lord's two natures, while they have almost entirely neglected to consider the contents or import of that union, on its God-ward side, as these were exhibited in the actions of His life on earth. They have done well in discussing the incarnation by which our Redeemer became man; but we know of nothing that has been written systematically, or scientifically, to show what we are taught by the history of our Redeemer considered as God manifested in the flesh. This, however, is not the matter with which we have presently to do. It is admitted that our Redeemer is the representative of God as really as He is the representative of man, and that He ought to be studied as the wisdom of God, by whom His nature and counsels are manifested, as well as the substitute of man, by whom atonement for sin was once for all accomplished. The real and only question presently in dispute is, Whether His representation both of God and man, in His state of incarnation, arose out of the fact that sin existed, or, whether it would have taken place had sin been altogether unknown?—*Ibid.*

(2) *Its nature as an impossible* à priori *subject of discussion.*

[13415] Men are richly endowed with the faculty of knowing what is and what ought to be, but they are left altogether destitute of the power to determine what any one thing would have been if the universe had been formed on a plan radically different from that on which it is presently constructed. There is no such thing as pure *à priori* knowledge. What we have proudly called by that name has all its origin in the senses ; and it is the great merit of Dr. M'Cosh that he has systematically shown what others may have hinted at, that the intuitions of the mind, however absolute and universal in their affirmations, are all called forth by particulars. All our acquisitions in knowledge are founded on, and grow out of, what we knew before. Is it not, then, presumptuous to attempt to determine by our own reasoning what would have taken place if the fall, that fundamental fact of human history, if the existence of sin, that fundamental fact in the history of the universe, had been otherwise? Is not the very supposition of a universe being formed on a theory diametrically opposed to that on which it has been constructed almost tantamount, so far as our limited faculties can judge, to the supposition of another God? . . . No supernatural doctrine can be established by *à priori* reasoning. To attempt to do so is to adopt a method of investigation which is far more dangerous in itself than any of its results, however bad, because it puts man's reasoning in the place of God's infallible testimony, and it only requires to be carried out consistently in order to unsettle and deprave and overthrow everything Christian. This, we think, is the radical vice of the whole circle of German thought in modern times, and above which none, even of its best men, have been able wholly to elevate themselves. None of their productions are framed on the inductive method, which is the only method by which we can arrive at the knowledge of things, whether it be the "things which are seen or the things which are unseen." —*Ibid.*

(3) *The appeal to Scripture, reason, and revelation for its solution.*

[13416] When a doctrine has been established on scriptural foundations it is quite competent for Reason to come forward as the handmaid of Revelation, and present the analogies to the doctrine which are to be found in nature or in the structure and operations of the human mind. In the first instance, however, every Christian doctrine ought to be taken from the Scriptures, and from these alone. To attempt to frame a Christian doctrine by *à priori* reasoning is speculative forgery. It is issuing human coin with a professedly Divine stamp thereon. Not less condemnable is that mongrel method, so often to be met with, of proving a point by the alternate use of reason and Scripture, the result of which is neither human nor Divine, but alloyed coin, in which the gold of heaven is often in a less proportion than the terrestrial brass. This linsey-woolsey doctrine, which is neither philosophy nor divinity, should be prohibited not only in the church of God, but in the schools of philosophy. It is a hybrid method of speculation, which, however imposing it may seem, like all other hybrids, will generate nothing. Whenever pure speculation is laid, either as the basis of doctrine, or is allowed to go side by side with Scripture in its establishment, theology invariably loses her independence. She becomes a handmaid instead of a mistress. In that case, too, the dominant philosophy invariably gives the tone and fashion to religious thought. This has been seen in a very remarkable manner in Germany, in which for more than a century theological systems have been found ebbing or flowing, waxing or waning, according to the state of the philosophical heavens. As Lord Bacon said, with reference to the false methods in natural science which prevailed before his own day, so may it be said respecting this vicious method of theologizing, that it makes the science of divinity "vertiginous, or in a state of perpetual rotation."—*Ibid.*

[13417] While admitting that all speculative difficulties must be met on speculative ground, we submit that, from the nature of the subject, the question whether our Lord would have become incarnate, if there had been no sin, must be determined solely by an appeal to Scripture. If it can be shown from Scripture to be an undisputable fact that our Lord was announced from the beginning as a Saviour and Deliverer ; if it can be shown that this is implied in all the titles given to His person, and in all the prefigurations and predictions of His work ; if it can be shown that when on earth the Bible never speaks of Him otherwise than as a Saviour, and everywhere points to His death as the sole end for which He came into the world ; if it can be shown that His whole exaltation state in heaven is based upon, grows out of, and is the reward of, His "becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross ;" if it can be shown that, speculatively considered, His death in the stead of His people gives a far fuller view of the Divine nature, and contributes more to the moral perfection of the universe than an incarnation without an atonement could possibly have done ; if it can be shown that from eternity He was ordained to become incarnate in order to make atonement—being "the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world," and that to eternity He will be regarded as "the Lamb that was slain ;" and in fine, if no trace, either in the past eternity or the coming eternity, either in the Church on earth or the Church in heaven, among men or among angels, is to be found of an incarnation irrespective of the atonement, then such an incarnation is not that of the Son of God—it is not that of the Bible—it is not that of God's eternal counsel—it is not that of the Church of God—it is not even entitled to be called a speculation, for it is desti-

tute of all foundation in the unchangeable laws of human thought. It is a pure imagination, and, from the sacredness of the subject to which it refers, we dare not call it a devout one. To adopt it would be in effect to be guilty of idolatry, for it would be to make an image of the incarnation, and worship it instead of the reality. —*Ibid.*

XV. False or Pretended Incarnations of Heathen Religions.

1 The mythologies of most nations afford traces, although faint, of the idea of incarnation, and may be regarded as so many gropings for the truth.

[13418] Sin has so isolated man from God, that he feels there is no hope of his restoration except "the gods come down in the likeness of men." This idea confronts us from all parts of the world, whether in the avatars of the Hindû, the election and worship of the Lama of Thibet, the metamorphoses of the Greek and Roman mythologies, or the wilder worship of the aborigines of America. The earlier Christian apologists attributed these caricatures of the true incarnation to Satan, and alleged that "he invented these fables by imitating the truth." Neander makes the profound suggestion that "at the bottom of these myths is the earnest desire, inseparable from man's spirit, for participation in the Divine nature as its true life—its anxious longing to pass the gulf which separates the God-derived soul from its original—its wish, even though unconscious, to secure that union with God which alone can renew human nature, and which Christianity shows us as a living reality. Nor can we be astonished to find the facts of Christianity thus anticipated in poetic forms (embodying in imaginative creations the innate yet indistinct cravings of the spirit) in the mythical elements of the old religions, when we remember that human nature itself, and all the forms of its development, as well as the whole course of human history, were intended by God to find their full accomplishment in Christ." The want that thus expresses itself in these fabled avatars lies at the foundation of idolatry. The unsatisfied nature of man demands that his Deity should be near him—should dwell with him. It first leads him to represent the Deity by the work of his own hands, and then to worship it. Or we may look upon these avatars as so many faint and distant irradiations of the holy light that shone upon the Garden through the first promise given to man. On the contrary, Kitto denies "that there is in Eastern mythology any incarnation in any sense approaching that of the Christian, and that least of all is there any where it has been most insisted on" ("Daily Bible Illust." on John i. 14). Cocker, in his late work ("Christianity and Greek Philosophy," N. Y., 1870, 8vo, p. 512), advances the theory that the idea of "a pure spiritual essence, without form and without emotion, pervading all and transcending all, is too vague and abstract to yield us comfort," and that therefore the need of an incarnation "became consciously or unconsciously 'the desire of nations'" by "the education of the race" and "by the dispensation of philosophy. . . . The idea of an incarnation was not unfamiliar to human thought, it was no new or strange idea to the heathen mind. The numberless metamorphoses of Grecian mythology, the incarnations of Brahma, the avatars of Vishnu, and the human form of Krishna, had naturalized the thought." (See Young, "Christ of History," and Dorner, "Lehre *v.* der Person Christi.")—*Rev. J. K. Johnston.*

[13419] The various avatars of Vishnu and the life of Buddha upon earth do not throw all beliefs in the incarnation of Deity into the region of superstition or mythology, but show that the human race has yearned unceasingly in the midst of its sins and delusions, after some such relation to the source of wisdom, power, righteousness, and love; and has indeed striven to find the point and the circumstance where God and man may be regarded not as two, but as one. If these desires and modes of appreciating the relation subsisting between God and the world were confined to Eastern paganisms and defunct faiths of a dateless past, there would be more colour for the charge vamped up in their name against the religion of Christ; but if, on the contrary, there is enough to show that the restless desire after a manifestation of God in the flesh, belongs to all nations and ages, to the nineteenth century as well as to the first, to modern Europe as well as to ancient Egypt; if Hegelianism and Positivism still perpetuate the struggle after the same reality; if, further, a steady inspection of our own hearts reveals the existence of the same eager inquiry, then the life and mastery of Christ acquire new and portentous importance, and are even in their most fundamental element the answer to our own earnest search.—*British Quarterly Review.*

XVI. Homiletical Remarks.

1 The obvious connection in which the incarnation stands to much of the irreligious thought of the present day.

[13420] It can hardly have escaped the notice of most of us that there is a peculiar tone of serious, disheartened scepticism in a great deal of the literature of the day. The witty lecturer who passes through the land as a peddler of the small wares of infidelity would not be admired by those who have a right to be considered as the thoughtful advocates of anti-religious opinion. The writers of this school seem, many of them, to live under a leaden sky; and with all their infidelity, they show that they are not at rest. It is not easy for a man to make a complete surrender of his moral nature. You may tell the Positivist that his creed would overthrow morality, and that it makes religion impossible. But he will not carry his principles to their logical conclusion. He tries to keep his religion after he has denied his God. He has cut the brightest

flowers from the tree of life, and he waters them in the vain hope that they will continue to flourish upon the dead stick of atheism, around which he has twined them. His heart is human still, though he repress its instincts. Like the Jews, who crucified the Saviour and then cast lots for His garments, he has stolen from the wardrobe of Christianity the only drapery which saves his doctrine from indecency. What he teaches as a substitute for the gospel is taught by the gospel itself in the only form in which it can ever be worthy of a moment's consideration. If he would worship *an ideal humanity* he must take Christ as the object of worship; if he would find comfort in the idea of an immortality of perpetuated influence he must associate it with a personal immortality as well; if he would see a typical illustration of true "altruism" he must believe in the self-sacrificing act of our Lord's atonement. But infidelity must go forward or go back. It must go back to Christ or on to despair. And when a man has discarded the eternal hope in Christ it is not strange that he should ask if life is worth living. Paul said long ago if in this life alone we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable. When a man has no hope of reward and no fear of penalty in a future life it is not strange that he should see in the limb of a tree or the water of a neighbouring stream the way to speedy peace. It is the loud voice of Christianity alone that can say with effect, "Do thyself no harm." Christ or Pessimism; the gospel of hope or the gospel of despair; salvation or suicide—these are the alternatives placed before us in sharp antithesis by the course of current thought. Never was there more significance in the Saviour's searching question, "Will ye also go away?" Never more than to-day was there need of weighing well the meaning of the profound answer of His disciple, "Lord, to whom shall we go but unto Thee? Thou only hast the words of eternal life."—*Rev. Prof. Patton.*

SECTIONAL INDEX.

SECTION XII.

JEHOVISTIC NAMES AND TITLES OF GOD.

CONTENTS.

		PAGE
1.	JEHOVAH	3
2.	JEHOVAH-ELYON : Jehovah most high. Psa. vii. 17 ; xlvii. 2 ; xcvii. 9	4
3.	JEHOVAH-JIREH : Jehovah will see or provide. Gen. xxii. 14	4
4.	JEHOVAH-MEKADDESHCEM : Jehovah that doth sanctify you. Exod. xxxi. 13 ; Levit. xx. 8 ; xxi. 8 ; xxii. 9, 16, ; Ezek. xx. 12	5
5.	JEHOVAH-NISSI : Jehovah my banner. Exod. xvii. 15	5
6.	JEHOVAH-ROHI : Jehovah my shepherd. Psa. xxiii. 1	6
7.	JEHOVAH-ROPHECA : Jehovah that healeth thee. Exod. xv. 26	6
8.	JEHOVAH-SHALOM : Jehovah send peace. Judges vi. 24	6
9.	JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH : Jehovah is there. Ezek. xlviii. 35	7
10.	JEHOVAH-TSEBAHOTH : Jehovah of hosts. 1 Sam. i. 3 ; Isa. li. 15	8
11.	JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU : Jehovah our righteousness. Jer. xxiii. 6 ; cf. xxxiii. 16	11

N.B.—These titles do not seem to require or admit of regular classification. However, groups of some of them might be formed as follows, namely :—(1) of Nos. 3 and 6 ; (2) of Nos. 8 and 11.

SECTIONAL INDEX.

SECTION XIII.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

Reference is given not only to the page where the article occurs, but to the No. of the article in the *Classified List* (p 14), as well as in the *body of the book*; and with *both* these aids the subject sought should invariably be studied.

	PAGE	ART.
Attributes Divine, Generally Considered	15	1
Compassion	88	21
Eternity	34	5
Faithfulness	79	18
Gentleness	95	24
Gloriousness	57	12
Goodness...	89	22
Graciousness	92	23
Holiness	50	9
Immutability	44	7
Infinity	33	4
Invisibility	32	3
Jealousy	98	25
Justice	74	17
Long-suffering	100	26
Love	85	20
Majesty	56	11
Mercifulness	102	27
Omnipotence	59	13
Omnipresence	63	14
Omniscience	67	15
Patience	105	28
Perfection	49	8
Sovereignty	53	10
Spirituality	30	2
Truth	81	19
Unsearchableness	39	6
Wisdom	70	16

SECTIONAL INDEX.

SECTION XIV.

SINS.

Reference is given not only to the page where the article occurs, but to the No. of the article in the *Classified Lists* (pp. 134-5), as well as in the *body of the book*; and with *both* these aids the subject sought should invariably be studied.

	PAGE	ART.
Abused Privileges, Sin of	136	2
Adding to the Doctrines of the Gospel	181	35
Alliance, Worldly	222	65
Anticipation of Evil	184	39
Apostasy	145	7
Ashamed of Christ	150	12
Backsliding	146	8
Believers (Sins of)	120	1
Besetting Sins	120	1
Bigotry	189	42
Blasphemy	175	28
Borrowing of Trouble	186	40
Cant	162	20
Carnal-mindedness	200	49
Christ, Ashamed of	150	12
,, Denying	151	13
Christian's Attitude in regard to Sinners, The	129	1
Commission, Sins of	124	1
Common-sense Reasons against Sinning	129	1
Conformity to the World	222	66
Conventional Religion	163	21
Coolness	141	5
Crime and Sin, Distinction between ...	113	1
Death, Fear of	152	15
Dejection	154	16
Delay in Religion	156	18
Delusions to believe a Lie	131	1
Denying Christ	151	13
Departing from God	148	9
Depravity, Human	113	1
Divisions, including Schism	191	43
Doubts	154	17
Enmity against God	200	50
Evil, Anticipation of	184	39
,, Rejoicing in	202	52
Excuses for Sinning	128	1
Fame, Love of	140	4
Fanaticism	193	44
Fear of Death	152	10
Fear of Man	152	15
Forgetting God	149	14
Form of Godliness without the Power	164	22
Formalism	166	23
Forsaking God	149	11
Friendship of the World	223	67
Fruitlessness	208	56
God, Departing from	148	9
,, Enmity against	200	50
,, Forgetting	149	10
,, Forsaking	149	11
Godliness, Mere Form of	164	22
Halting between Two Opinions ...	160	19
Human Depravity	113	1
Hypocrisy	169	24
Idle Words, Use of	209	57
Impenitence	201	51
Indifference and Coolness	141	29
Irreverence	175	5
Levity	210	58
Lie, Delusions to believe a	131	1
Little Sins	122	1
Love of Fame	140	4
,, World	224	68
Lukewarmness	143	6
Man, Fear of	152	14
Mortal Sins	124	1
Omission, Sins of	124	1
Over-anxiety	186	41
Party Spirit	196	46
Past, Sins of the	125	1
Pharisaism	172	25
Pomp and Vanities, Love of	213	62
Preaching another Gospel	182	36

	PAGE	ART.
Prejudice	194	45
Presumption	177	30
Presumptuous Sins	126	1
Privileges, Abused	136	2
Profanity	177	31
Punishment of Sin	130	1
Quenching of the Spirit, The	137	3
Rejoicing in Evil	202	52
Religion, Conventional	163	21
,, Delay in	156	18
Respectable Sins, So-called	126	1
Restlessness	183	37
Sacrilege	179	32
Sanctimoniousness	173	26
Schism	191	43
Scoffing	180	33
Secret Sin	127	1
Sectarianism	196	46
Selfishness	183	38
Self-righteousness	173	27
Shibboleth, Use of	197	47
Sin, Characteristics of	116	1
,, Definition of	112	1
,, Description of	112	1
,, Generally	112	1
,, Nature of	113	1
,, Punishment of	130	1
Sin and Crime, Distinction between ...	113	1
Sinning, Common-sense Reason against	129	1
,, Excuses for	128	1
Sins, Believers, of	120	1
Sins, Besetting	120	1
,, Commission, of	124	1
,, Little	122	1
,, Omission of	124	1
,, Past, of the	125	1
,, Presumptuous	126	1
,, Respectable	126	1
,, Secret	127	1
,, Unpardonable, The	127	1
Spirit, The Quenching of the	137	3
Spiritual Blindness	202	53
Superstition	198	48
Swearing	180	34
Trifling, Religious	211	59
Trouble, Borrowing of	186	40
Unbelief	204	54
Ungodliness	208	55
Unfaithfulness	211	60
Unpardonable Sin, The	127	1
Unprofitableness	212	61
Vain Thoughts	213	63
Vainglory	217	64
Vanities, Love of Pomps and	213	62
Vanity	217	64
Words, Use of Idle	209	51
World, Conformity to	222	66
,, Friendship of the	223	67
,, Love of	224	68
Worldliness	225	69
Worldly Alliance	222	65

SECTIONAL INDEX.

SECTION XV.

CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS.

N.B.—This Index is much curtailed, as a *full Syllabus* is given with each leading subject in *the body of the book*. See pp. 231, 283, 289, 319, 380, 390, 401, 434, 447, 453, 461, 471, 490.

	PAGE
Adam, Divine Promise of Mercy to	391
Adoption	448
Analogy between the Works of God and the Works of Man	322
Angelic Host, The	364
Atonement	408–421
Christian Doctrine of God	284
Christian Doctrine of Creation	329
Christian Doctrine of the Trinity	289
Connection between Sin and Suffering ...	386
Cosmogonies, Superiority of the Biblical to other	322
Covenants, The	392
Creation, The Christian Doctrine of	329
Creeds Generally, Origin of	273
Creeds, The Church's, Classification of ...	247
Divine Government, Institution of Natural Law in	354
Doctrine, Biblical and Geological Science ...	321
Doctrine of God, Christian	284
Doctrine of Creation, Christian...	329
Doctrine of the Trinity, Christian	289
Doctrine, Effects of Good and Bad Contrasted	280
Doctrine, the Dangers to which it is Liable ...	280
Dogmas, Rise of Theological	237
Election, or Predestination	435
Evolution as Related to the Creation	323
Fall of Man	381
Forgiveness of Sin	453
God, Analogy between the Works of, and Works of Man	322
God—in Relation to Human Sin	387
God, The Christian Doctrine of	284
Government Divine, Institution of Natural Law in	354
Grace, Bestowal of	462
Host, The Angelic	364
Incarnation, The Holy	490
Institution of Natural Law in Divine Government	354
Justification of Sinners	472
Man, Creation of	343
Man, Fall of	381
Nature, System of, in the Universe	329
Normal Relations Between God and Man, The	284–378
,, ,, Breach of	380–400
,, ,, Restoration of	401
Peculiar People, Choice of a	392
Powers of Darkness and Dominion of Satan ...	370
Predestination, or Election	435
Redemption, Divine Preliminary Arrangements for	391
,, Scheme of...	401
,, Special Acts and Decrees of God the Father in	435
,, Work and Office of God the Son in	490
Reconciliation, Substitution in Relation to ...	422
Sanctification, Substitution in Relation to ...	423
Satan, Powers of Darkness and Dominion of ...	370
Satisfaction, Use and Abuse of the Term ...	425
Science, Biblical Doctrine and Geological ...	321
Sin, Fact and Fruit of	381
Sin, Forgiveness of	453
Spirits, World of	361
Substitution in Relation to Reconciliation ...	422
Substitution in Relation to Sanctification ...	423
Suffering, Connection between Sin and ...	386
Theology, Introduction to	232
Trinity, The Christian Doctrine of the ...	289
Universe, System of Nature in the	329
Works of God, Analogy between, and Works of Man	322
World of Spirits	361

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